

Reacting to the Past: A New Approach to Student Engagement  
and to Enhancing General Education

A White Paper Report for the Teagle Foundation

By

Richard Gid Powers, John M. Burney, and Mark C. Carnes

With contributions by

Martin Braun, Larry Carver, J. Patrick Coby, John C. Eby, Dana M. Johnson, Frank G. Kirkpatrick,  
Nancy Felson, and Michael S. Pettersen

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In *Our Underachieving Colleges* (2006), Derek Bok calls on administrators and faculty to experiment with “active-learning” pedagogies in order to determine those that succeed at fulfilling the central purposes of higher education. The authors of this report believe that “Reacting to the Past,” one of the most radical of the “active-learning” pedagogies, has established an extraordinary record at engaging students; it also has the potential of addressing many of the deficiencies of the distribution system of general education that prevail at most colleges and universities.

“Reacting to the Past” consists of elaborate games, set in the past, in which students are assigned roles informed by classic texts. Students construct arguments from the same intellectual sources their characters would have used, and they support positions through reasoned, sometimes impassioned, writing and speeches. As students take control of these historical dramas and struggle for their characters to prevail, the students become intellectually and emotionally engaged in ways that astonish them—and their professors. The success of the Reacting approach has been verified through both self-conducted and independent surveys and studies. Reacting, which in 2001 existed at a single institution—Barnard College—has since spread to 300 colleges and universities in the United States, as well as several institutions in Europe, Asia, and Australia.

This White Paper Report surveys current thinking about the problems of general education in higher education, and endorses the emerging consensus as to what constitutes the foundation of effective general education as propounded by the American Association of College and Universities’ *Liberal Education and America’s Promise* (LEAP): engaging “big questions,” teamwork, oral and written communications skills, development of critical thinking and the art of inquiry, ethical learning and empathy, fostering civic knowledge and global engagement, and introducing students to global citizenship. The Report further demonstrates how Reacting addresses these learning outcomes, and, through its key element of “liminality,” does so in a remarkably effective way.

The Report lists institutions that have already made Reacting a key element in their general education curricula and are part of a formal consortium of forty colleges and universities, and presents new developments in the Reacting community that are making the approach even more suitable as a solution to the problems of general education. Already, with the help of a “Fresh Thinking in Education” grant from the Teagle foundation, the Reacting curriculum is in position to fulfill specific general education needs in various historical periods, scholarly disciplines, geographical areas, and skill categories. Game developers are now urged to address LEAP general education objectives specifically in their projects. Although this paper focuses on the curricular applications of Reacting in relation to general education, it also discusses attempts to integrate the approach within existing courses within departments. The National Science Foundation has awarded a major grant to a consortium of Reacting institutions to develop more Reacting games with a science focus; other scholars are proposing a Reacting approach to the history of the United States as an alternative to the customary survey lecture.

Appendices provide: 1) detailed descriptions of existing published and downloadable games and how they fulfill general education objectives; 2) a list of institutions belonging to the “Reacting to the Past” consortium; and 3) an overview of assessment of Reacting looking at both the effectiveness of the pedagogy and faculty experience with the games in their classrooms.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction: New Approach to General Education? .....	4
II. Current Debates and Key Outcomes for the Renewal of General Education.....	10
III. “Reacting to the Past”: A New Pedagogy .....	17
IV. Achieving Academic Excellence: Essential Learning Outcomes .....	21
V. Curriculum Development and the Future of “Reacting to the Past” .....	39
VI. Conclusion: The “Reacting to the Past” Community and the Strengthening of Liberal Education.....	46
Appendices:	
Appendix 1. Descriptions of the “Reacting to the Past” Games .....	48
Appendix 2. “Reacting to the Past” Consortium Members.....	65
Appendix 3. Assessment of Student Learning for “Reacting to the Past” and Faculty Survey .....	66

## I. INTRODUCTION: A NEW APPROACH TO GENERAL EDUCATION?

“Reacting to the Past” is a radically different way of engaging students with big questions. It casts them in historical roles and immerses them in elaborate games that explore crises of great import in the history of ideas. They construct their arguments from the same intellectual sources their characters would have used, and they have to support their positions through reasoned, sometimes impassioned writing and speeches about Athenian democracy, the Council of Nicaea, the French Revolution, the trials of Galileo or Anne Hutchinson, a succession crisis in the Ming dynasty, newly independent India, or post-apartheid South Africa. They might have to draw on the ideas of Locke, Rousseau, Confucius, Plato, Calvin, St. Paul, Gandhi, Galileo, Aristotle, St. Thomas of Aquinas, or Thomas Paine. They maneuver through the Tudor or eighteenth-century French court, debate aesthetics among Elizabethan dramatists or nineteenth-century Parisian salons, and examine scientific principles in early modern Italian universities and the Royal Society of Victorian London.

Although the developers call these exercises “games,” 100% of instructors surveyed in April 2009 agreed that “Reacting to the Past” provides a high level of academic challenge. The same students who might have complained that working through Plato’s *Republic* was an “arid, cerebral exercise” become passionate about the ideas of great texts, throw themselves into the fray of great historical conflicts, and retain a lasting grasp of the importance of the events they have lived through for a semester. Student comments are illustrative:

- “Reacting was completely unique in my college experience. In playing those games, the words of Gandhi, Socrates, and other historical figures became mine, transcending the academic distance to which I had grown accustomed and tapping into a very personal,

intimate realm. Their thoughts, their histories, their biographies are real and alive in my mind.”<sup>1</sup>

- “Even though it was so hard and took a lot of time and effort, it was amazing.”<sup>2</sup>
- “History isn’t just about dates and historical events, but most importantly, about the people, the ideas, the explorations, the quandaries, the downfalls and tragedies [all of which I am now] able to relate to the present . . . and isn’t that what history is all about?”<sup>3</sup>
- “You’re not just reading the *Republic* and these other great works. You’re living them.”<sup>4</sup>
- “This allows you to really take part in history. It’s not you sitting there listening to your professor babble on. You actually get to do something.”<sup>5</sup>
- “After taking Reacting, I felt like I really understood why history happened the way it did, and the ways it could have turned out differently.”<sup>6</sup>

Mark Carnes, Professor of History at Barnard College and creator of “Reacting to the Past,” notes that while simulations have been a commonplace of graduate programs in political science, economics and business schools, Reacting differs from these chiefly in its reliance on the concept of “liminality,” a term that connotes “that threshold region where the normal rules of society are suspended or subverted.” Reacting transforms the classroom into a liminal space by bringing to life the realities of different historical peoples and practices. The resulting structures, in their ritual or perhaps even theatrical elements, shift the student’s frame of reference from the contemporary, quotidian world to that of the historical period of the game. “Liminal settings,” Carnes writes, “are characterized by uncertainty and emotional intensity, by the inversion of status and social hierarchies, and by imaginative expressiveness.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Amanda Houle, Barnard College '06, in “Reacting to ‘Reacting,’” *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 38, no. 4 (2006): 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ali Yehia Zakaria, American University in Cairo '10.

<sup>3</sup> Dayna Hardtman, Smith College '06.

<sup>4</sup> Rachel Feinmark, Columbia College '05.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Zivin, Trinity College '07.

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Crossman, Barnard College '06.

<sup>7</sup> Mark C. Carnes, “Being There: The Liminal Classroom,” *The Chronicle Review*, Oct. 8, 2004.

Liminality nowadays is the province of religion and theater, and rarely is admitted into an academic exercise, except, perhaps, on athletic fields.”<sup>7</sup>

The liminal aspects of Reacting games help students to lose their shyness and reserve by encouraging them to become, for fifty minutes or so, another person possessed by ideas and interests that cease to be intellectual abstractions and have instead been infused with the survival instincts of emotion and feelings. “Reacting liberates students from the constraints of their own sense of self, while imposing the social and political rules of the past and binding students temporarily to particular ideological viewpoints. Students learn history by following the rules of the game, and they teach each other the ideological underpinnings of the past by working through its great intellectual contest.”<sup>8</sup>

Professors too have found the quality and impact of Reacting remarkable. In an April 2009 survey of over 50 faculty who have taught the games, 94% agreed that Reacting is an effective pedagogy; 63% of those indicated that they thought it was highly effective. Instructors have confirmed the survey results with individual comments:

- “I have found teaching a ‘Reacting’ Seminar to be one of the best educational things I have done in the past 25 years. I have never seen first-year students so engaged in discussion, research, and intellectual conversation as I have in the seminar this fall. Keeping up with their strategies and plans, as they seek to accomplish their ‘victory objectives’ has me deeply engaged as well. It’s been a great experience for all of us.”<sup>9</sup>
- “Reacting to the Past has made a major impression on campus life. Students are debating the issues of Athenian democracy or Confucian propriety over dinner and in their dorms. Shy students speak, and assertive students lead. Classes never end on time, more papers

---

Mark C. Carnes, “Being There: The Liminal Classroom,” *The Chronicle Review*, Oct. 8, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Frank G. Kirkpatrick, Ellsworth Morton Tracey Lecturer and Professor of Religion, Trinity College, Letter to the Editor, *The Chronicle Review*, Nov. 12, 2004.

are written than are assigned, and the quality of the work is among the best I have ever seen.”<sup>10</sup>

- “I have never seen students this engaged. They write more than the assignments require; everyone, shy or not, participates vigorously in the debates. They read important texts with real understanding, making complex arguments and ideas their own.”<sup>11</sup>
- Some faculty have even reported that their experience with Reacting games changes how they teach, as demonstrated in comments from the April 2009 survey:
- “Reacting has completely transformed my approach to teaching. I find it forces me to be much more invested in my students...I have rethought my role as a history teacher: I no longer try to cover ‘everything’ in lectures, but rather see myself as a coach in helping students navigate through the existing avalanche of information that is available. Instead of attempting to instill a pre-determined amount of information in the students, I now focus on igniting their desire to learn more and assisting them in finding what they need.”
- “For me as an instructor, it’s made teaching fun again. I’ve begun to revise all my courses around either Reacting games or modified versions. . . . Students regularly tell me that they learn more preparing for the simulations than they would sitting through traditional lectures.”
- “It is a great mid-career rejuvenator. . . . It makes you see the survey through fresh eyes.”
- “My transformation from ‘professor’ to ‘coach’ in Reacting has resulted in deeper relations with my students that go far beyond the course. Reacting provides faculty with a natural way to bring together instruction and advising. . . . I have never seen such a successful pedagogy for a large percentage of students.”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> J. Patrick Coby, Professor of Government, Smith College.

<sup>11</sup> Larry Carver, Doyle Professor of Western Civilization and Director of the Liberal Arts Honors Programs, University of Texas at Austin, Letter to the Editor, *The Chronicle Review*, Nov. 12, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> “Reacting to the Past” Instructor Survey, April 2009. See Appendix 3.

Part of the appeal for students is the social experience of Reacting courses. In nearly all games, students are organized into factions representing the clashing groups and ideas of the times: Oligarchs in ancient Athens; critics of Darwin's scientific method in 1862, moderates in the Holy Office during the Roman Inquisition, Feuillants during the French Revolution, members of the Muslim League in 1945. Then the factions discuss among themselves strategies for "winning," strategies they have to implement in formal papers and speeches to persuade the "indeterminates" to side with them as the events reach a climax.

The students are not just involved in historical events and issues: they are impassioned, and they take control of arguments that in conventional "chalk and talk" classes remain inert on the page. Their emotions as well as their critical reasoning are engaged, and as Antonio Damasio argues so well in *Descartes' Error*, unless our rational facilities are engaged by our emotions, that is, our survival instincts, the mind debates itself circularly and endlessly. Reacting students rely on the ideas they learn to win, that is, to survive in dangerous historical circumstances. But beyond winning the games, students learn to understand and give voice to world-views and philosophical positions and to empathize with the variety of cultural and political positions that must be reconciled to resolve any crisis. They report that those ideas and their personal consequences last long after the game is over.

Reacting has now grown from a single course taught at Barnard College in 1995 to a national movement with nine games published by Pearson Education, another ten available in electronic format and actively played across the country, and a dozen additional full games in earlier stages of development. Faculty at more than 300 campuses have taught using Reacting games, while forty institutions are official members of the "Reacting to the Past" consortium. This kind of success has led some to wonder whether Reacting might not be envisioned as a new and exciting approach to general education.<sup>13</sup> Support from the Teagle Foundation has allowed the Reacting Advisory Board to discuss the implications of approach

---

<sup>13</sup> Reacting Advisory Board members include Martin Braun, Queens College, CUNY; John M. Burney, Drake University; Larry Carver, University of Texas at Austin; J. Patrick Coby, Smith College; John C. Eby, Loras College; Nancy Felson, University of Georgia; Frank G. Kirkpatrick, Trinity College; Michael S. Pettersen, Washington & Jefferson College; and Richard Gid Powers, College of Staten Island, CUNY.

for general education with faculty at two summer conferences held at Barnard College and to commission the development of new games that should help deepen curricular coverage of key topics and themes for general education.

## II. CURRENT DEBATES AND KEY OUTCOMES FOR THE RENEWAL OF GENERAL EDUCATION

The most obvious, and perhaps most important, characteristic of American higher education is its diversity. The differences between major research universities and community colleges, for instance, are more striking than their commonalities, to say nothing of military academies, religious institutions, historically black institutions, and small liberal arts colleges with deep roots in their localities. It is just as obvious that general education, which seeks to prepare graduates for personal growth, civic engagement, and global citizenship, will reflect those differences, as it should. Nevertheless, decades of research has identified both common problems and common learning outcomes that most, or perhaps all, institutions see as the goals of general education. The higher education community has to question whether the means employed to accomplish liberal education at most institutions are in fact adequate to attain these outcomes.

Derek Bok, the former president of Harvard University, provides one of the most cogent critiques of higher education.<sup>14</sup> In *Our Underachieving Colleges*, he argues that over the past half century colleges have achieved only modest success in their approach to general education. For the past few decades, administrators and faculty have piled more burdens onto the general education programs despite the fact that there is little evidence that such programs have succeeded in meeting any of those goals. “Making general education the focus of curricular debates does not serve it well,” Bok notes.” As new needs arise, more and more requirements are loaded into this one portion of the curriculum—learning to think carefully about moral issues, to understand different races and cultures, or to function in a more global society, to mention but a few recent examples. Eventually general education programs take on so many responsibilities that they cannot possibly do justice to them all.”<sup>15</sup> He calls on colleges to think in terms of

---

<sup>14</sup> Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

the desired outcomes of general education using their own unique missions and resources such as the LEAP report. Bok's own suggestions match up closely with the LEAP outcomes discussed below (indeed he was part of the AAC&U initiative): the ability to communicate, critical thinking, moral reasoning, preparing citizens, living with diversity, living in a more global society, a breadth of interests, and preparing for work."<sup>16</sup>

The overwhelming majority of colleges oblige students to fulfill their general education requirements through a distribution system. But these schemes succeed only "where faculty are willing to spend considerable time advising students, where undergraduates are highly motivated to secure a well-rounded education, and where special courses are provided (especially in science) that are specifically designed to awaken curiosity and create enthusiasm in young people whose principal interests lie in other areas of the curriculum." But such conditions, Bok notes, "probably exist in relatively few colleges." Everywhere else, he adds, "the drawbacks to a simple distribution requirement seem so apparent that one must ask why the approach has survived at all, let alone become the dominant means of ensuring the desired breadth of study. The most likely explanation is that distribution requirements have something to offer every constituency."<sup>17</sup> One might add that these requirements serve all constituencies *except* students, since Bok cites research that "by some calculations, the average student will be unable to recall most of the factual content of a typical lecture within fifteen minutes after the end of class. In contrast, interests, values and cognitive skills are all likely to last longer, as are concepts and knowledge that students have acquired not by passively reading or listening to lectures but through their own mental efforts."<sup>18</sup>

Often general education programs appear to have been stitched together like a quilt from the unwanted introductory offerings of the various departments. Or the departments insist on having a presence in general education as a strategy to recruit majors, rather than examining how best to contribute to a sequence of student learning. There seems to have been some recent movement away from the

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 67-77.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 49.

distribution approach to general education, but many institutions still have a long way to go. (See May 2009 AAC&U survey).<sup>19</sup>

The situation Bok describes constitutes a crisis in general education. At many larger universities full-time faculty routinely impose courses that they do not want to teach and often do not teach on students who do not want to take them and do not understand why they are obliged to do so. At many levels a theoretical commitment on the part of professors to the liberal arts education of their students is not matched by any personal commitment to educating their students in areas outside the professors' credentialed field of competence. Not only is there a lack of motivation among faculty, but the ordinary strategy for attaining broad goals for liberal education, a distribution of introductory courses across the curriculum, is patently inadequate to the task.

But twenty years of research on active learning and teaching offers ample information on teaching strategies that do work “in achieving goals, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, that faculties everywhere hold dear.”<sup>20</sup> Bok summarizes much of that research, indicating that “Many investigators have found that critical thinking and learning in general can be enhanced by giving students problems and having them teach each other by working together in groups.”<sup>21</sup>

If Bok makes a cogent criticism of current practices in general education, the Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U) has made the broadest effort to re-envision and re-invigorate general education through its *Liberal Education and America's Promise* project (LEAP). To define the commonalities contained within the entire range of approaches to general education, the AAC&U assembled a group of educational leaders and practitioners who pooled their collective experience and surveyed the national condition of general education. Their final report, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, constitutes a broad consensus on the objectives of general education for the twenty-first century. The report establishes both the “Essential Learning Outcomes” for higher education

---

<sup>19</sup> Association of American Colleges & Universities, *College Learning for the New Global Century: A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise* (2007).

<sup>20</sup> Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 312.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

and “Principles of Excellence.” Faculty who have taught Reacting courses find the pedagogy to be a powerful method to accomplish many of LEAP’s outcomes.

### **LEAP “Essential Outcomes”**

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
  - a. Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts
  - b. Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring
2. Intellectual and Practical Skills, including
  - a. Inquiry and analysis
  - b. Critical and creative thinking
  - c. Written and oral communication
  - d. Quantitative literacy
  - e. Information literacy
  - f. Teamwork and problem solving
3. Personal and Social Responsibility, including
  - a. Civic knowledge and engagement, local and global
  - b. Intercultural knowledge and competence
  - c. Ethical reasoning and action
  - d. Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
  - e. Active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges
4. Integrative learning, including
  - a. Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
  - b. Application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

“Reacting to the Past” provides faculty with an important tool with the potential for achieving these outcomes. It provides students with authentic problems that require both collaboration within a group and negotiations between competing groups in order to achieve important objectives. It moves students beyond the distribution survey and forces them to grapple with problems that require deeper engagement and understanding of diverse world views and cultures.

While no single course or pedagogy can realistically be expected to address every one of the LEAP essential outcomes and sub-competencies, it is remarkable that *all* Reacting games address *most* of them. Whether students are playing a game set in ancient Athens, Ming China, or Puritan New England, they are immersed in cultures radically different from their own, they have to exercise and develop their intellectual and practical skills as they search through difficult texts to master the knowledge their characters would bring to bear on the conflicts, they have to take personal responsibility for participating in a team approach to solving problems, and they have to integrate knowledge from across the disciplines if they are to be effective. Instructors are clear in confirming the success of Reacting games in achieving these learning outcomes in their courses. In the April 2009 survey, 53 instructors found “Reacting to the Past” to be “Very Effective” or “Effective” in producing student learning of content or skills in these areas:

96.2% Inquiry and Analysis

96.1% Critical Thinking

96.1% Oral Communication

92.4% Integrative Learning

90.6% Teamwork

88.7% Knowledge of Human Cultures

86.7% Written Communication

86.5% Civic Knowledge or Knowledge of Democracy

75.5% Ethical Reasoning

LEAP’s “Essential Outcomes” are reinforced by the “LEAP Principles of Excellence,” which bear more directly on whether specific general education strategies are appropriate to attaining the LEAP outcomes.

### **LEAP “Principles of Excellence”**

1. Aim high, and make excellence inclusive: make the essential learning outcomes a framework for the entire educational experience, connecting school, college, work and life.
2. Give students a compass: focus each student’s plan of study on achieving the essential learning outcomes—and assess progress.
3. Teach the arts of inquiry and innovation: immerse all students in analysis, discovery, problem solving, and communication, beginning in school and advancing through college.
4. Engage the big questions: teach through the curriculum to far-reaching issues—contemporary and enduring—in science and society, cultures and values, global interdependence, the changing economy, and human dignity and freedom.
5. Connect knowledge with choices and action: prepare students for citizenship and work through engaged and guided learning on “real-world” problems.
6. Foster civic, intercultural, and ethical learning: emphasize personal and social responsibility in every field of study.
7. Assess students’ ability to apply learning to complex problems: use assessment to deepen learning and to establish a culture of shared purpose and continuous improvement.

Once again, “Reacting to the Past” Instructors praise the pedagogy for embodying these principles. The vast majority agreed that Reacting was “Very Effective” or “Effective” in engaging students in learning by providing these authentic experiences:

100% Providing Academic Challenge

94% Engaging with Big Questions

94% Developing Students’ Ability to Apply Learning to Complex Problems

- 92% Teaching the Art of Inquiry
- 90% Connecting Knowledge with Choices and Actions
- 85.7% Fostering Civic Learning
- 82% Fostering Intercultural Understanding
- 78% Fostering Ethical Learning
- 77.6% Teaching the Art of Innovation

Assessment of student learning conducted by psychologist Steven Stroessner with support of grants from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education, and through course and program evaluations by faculty at several colleges, confirm the impact of Reacting on student learning. An overview of the assessment studies is provided in the appendices. Assessment confirms that students in a variety of institutions are becoming more engaged in classroom discussions, more willing to work in teams, and are demonstrating improvement skills in rhetorical presentation, critical thinking, and analysis. They also develop higher levels of empathy and a greater understanding of contingency in human history and thus the role of individual action and engagement. (See Appendix 3)

Faculty from many different types of institutions have replicated these results in a wide range of courses including both major/disciplinary courses and general education courses. Those broader uses include First Year seminars, Honors and interdisciplinary programs, and other areas of general education. Thus “Reacting to the Past” games provide general education committees with a potent box of tools. Revising a curriculum to teach a carefully chosen group of Reacting games has the potential to meet many of the objectives to current general education programs and to help institutions pursue academic excellence and student achievement through powerful and proven classroom experiences.

### III. “REACTING TO THE PAST”: A NEW PEDAGOGY

#### **The Basic Concept**

Most college seminars adopt, intentionally or not, a Socratic approach: the instructor guides students through difficult texts by posing questions. This course is different. Here students will play one or more elaborate games. Each game lasts about ten class sessions, during which the instructor steps out of her role as moderator of the debate to become a “gamemaster” and facilitator. Students assume responsibility for the debate in the classroom and re-enact the proceedings of assemblies, court rooms, and scientific societies from the past.

For the first few sessions of each game, the instructor provides guidance on the issues and historical context on which the game will turn. On the second or third session, the instructor will assign students roles based on historical figures. Early in the third session (or thereabouts), the class will break into factions, as students with similar roles will meet together to plan how to accomplish their objectives. They often will meet in factions outside of class as well.

By the fourth or fifth session, the class will again meet as one. Students whose characters function in a supervisory capacity—president of the Athenian Assembly in 403 B.C., First Grand Secretary in the Hanlin Academy of the Ming Dynasty, Governor General of the British colony at the Simla Conference in India, 1945—will preside over what transpires. The instructor will intrude merely to resolve disputes or issue rulings on other matters. Much of the instructor’s role during this time will be conducted through e-mail or direct contact with individual students outside of class and through providing advice to factions within the game, but the instructor also empowers the students themselves to struggle with issues and solve problems while the classes are in session.

The heart of the game is persuasion. For nearly every role to which students are assigned, they must persuade others that “their” views make more sense than those of their opponents. Their views will be informed by important texts cited in the role descriptions. Within the limits of six or seven class

sessions (most commonly 75-minute sessions although Reacting games have been taught in all class formats) the students attempt to resolve a crisis or write a constitution. Those who succeed in persuading the other representatives/delegates/officials of their cause will gain votes and ultimately “win” the game. But all will have participated in an intensive experience where the purpose was to express a coherent world view in dialogue with competing views, not simply to earn a grade from an instructor.

The instructor then devotes several classes session to a post-mortem on the historical, political, cultural, and/or religious issues that were generated by the game, as well as a discussion of the particular skills the students developed while playing the game.

### **Historical Contingency and Individual Agency**

Most general education survey courses teach what happened. Historians and other scholars deduce the factors—usually economic, sociological, political, and technological—that caused some consequence: the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries gave rise to worker’s movements; the growth of maritime commerce in ancient Athens contributed to its supremacy in naval engagements; etc. Often missing from scholarly studies is the importance of individual actions and decisions. Reacting presumes that individuals play a significant role in history; it asserts that broader economic and social forces place constraints on what individuals may do, but that those forces do not determine human events. People do.

Reacting seeks to replicate the historical context of a particular past, with all its causal forces: economic, sociological, political, and otherwise. Each Reacting game is based on the designers’ sense of the period. What happened in the past will not necessarily repeat itself in this game, but the “real” history may provide some sense of the likely issues that will emerge and of the designers’ understanding of historical causation. If students study the historical context carefully, they will have a better chance of understanding what will likely happen in the future. That is true in life as well.

Yet Reacting also provides students with the opportunity to explore counterfactual issues of individual agency: Would a different constellation of leaders in ancient Athens have effectively resisted the rise of Athenian democracy? Would a different set of arguments have prevented Galileo from being convicted by the Inquisition? To assert that human agency matters is to say that what actually happened need not have happened. Reacting asserts that history is contingent on multiple factors, including the vagaries of human individuality. Thus students learn the value of individual engagement. The games introduce students to many of the skills—persuasive speech and writing, teamwork, negotiation, and leadership—that they will need to become engaged in the larger world themselves.

### **Course Requirements<sup>22</sup>**

*Critical Reading of Important Texts:* The central premise of the Reacting pedagogy is that ideas influence lives and that the problems confronting particular lives influence the evolution of ideas. This study of ideas cannot be undertaken without consideration of the social context in which they emerged, and that the study of people requires an awareness of the intellectual constructs that have shaped their societies and cultures. Unlike the “great books” approach to classic texts, which often entails discussion of the texts with scant reference to their historical context, Reacting encourages examination of the texts in the light of the historical moment that brought them to the fore.

The readings, consequently, tend to be of two types: 1) the works of important thinkers; and 2) books and articles that establish the social or historical context. Students may be daunted by their first encounter with Plato’s *Republic*, Galileo’s *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems*, or the literature of modern Hindu and Islamic nationalism. These works are not easy because the ideas themselves are (literally) so thoughtful. There are good reasons why they have had so powerful an impact on civilizations.

*Effective and Purposeful Writing:* Reacting students have two primary ways to express their views: orally and in writing. Each game includes writing assignments: Commonly students are asked to

---

<sup>22</sup> <<http://www.barnard.edu/reacting/curriculum>>.

produce two-three formal essays totaling ten to twelve pages. Reacting students must understand the ideas that inform their historical roles; they must also persuade others that the ideas make sense. Writing in Reacting is an exercise in persuasion. Students are forced to develop strong arguments, capable of withstanding the criticisms of students assigned to adversary roles.

Because the purpose of written work is to persuade other students, their papers are nearly always shared with the class, often electronically or through a course management system. Just as students will sometimes criticize the views of those whose purposes differ from their own, they will subject each student's written work to a sharp reading. The written work will form an important part of class discussions.

*Purposeful Class Participation:* Reacting students must also seek to achieve their game objectives by expressing their views in the full classroom. They will sometimes speak as a member of a particular team or faction; sometimes they will be alone; and sometimes their role will be indeterminate, allowing them the freedom to write their own game objectives in response to what they read and hear. But in all roles, students must sooner or later seek to persuade others so as to achieve their objectives and win the game.

In most games students will combine short formal speeches at a podium with more informal participation in class debates such as asking questions, refuting opponents, clarifying their own arguments. Those students whose roles make them responsible for running the class may determine who speaks and when, which may prove frustrating to some students. As a means of ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak, the Reacting classroom normally is provided with a podium, at which anyone may stand. Anyone who approaches the podium asserts a right to give a speech, to pose questions, or to address the class. If someone is already at the podium, other students must take place in line behind her.

## IV. ACHIEVING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

As noted in Chapter II, the AAC&U LEAP project has created a consensus around the essential learning outcomes for liberal education. A survey of Reacting instructors has revealed that the games provide excellent tools for intentionally pursuing many of those outcomes. This chapter will explore six of these outcomes in more depth to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Reacting pedagogy:

- Engaging with Big Questions
- Teamwork
- Oral and Written Communication
- Critical Thinking and the Art of Inquiry
- Fostering Ethical Thinking and Empathy
- Fostering Civic Knowledge and Engagement
- Global Citizenship

### “Engaging Big Questions”

One needs only look at the descriptions of individual games in Appendix 1 to understand the range of “big questions” and authentic problems that students confront in Reacting games. Several examples will demonstrate this:

- *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945*: Students are asked to confront the big question: how do you reconcile competing religious identities with building a unified nation?
- *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791*: Students are asked to confront the dilemma of Rousseau’s concept of the general will: is it possible to construct a democracy in which citizens fully participate in making the laws and sacrifice individual

rights for the larger common good? And when some violate the provisions of that general contract, is violence a legitimate tool to coerce obedience to that general will?

- *The Trial of Anne Hutchinson*: Can a religiously based state tolerate a diversity of opinions?
- *Charles Darwin, the Copley Medal, and the Rise of Naturalism, 1862-64*: What methods constitute “good” science? What implications do Charles Darwin’s concepts have for the larger culture?
- *Constantine and Council of Nicaea*: How does religion interact with politics in defining religious and national identity?
- *Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, 1587*: How can tradition be preserved in the face of new and unprecedented challenges demanding immediate and innovative response?
- *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*: What light do the Athenians’ struggles to write a constitution, define the electorate, and pay for government shed on the logic behind the American and other modern constitutions?
- *The Trial of Galileo*: Does a society benefit from the propagation of ideas that contradict religious beliefs and imperil souls?

## **Teamwork**

Research on collaborative learning has established that students who learn in small groups demonstrate higher achievement, have more favorable attitudes toward learning, and persist in courses and programs.<sup>23</sup> Reacting provides teamwork experiences that mirror many of the best practices that Karl Smith and others call for in successful cooperative learning groups: positive interdependence, promotive

---

<sup>23</sup> See a summary of this research in Elizabeth F. Barkley, K. Patricia Cross, and Claire Howell Major, *Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), especially pages 14-25. Also see David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Karl Smith, “Cooperative Learning Returns to College,” *Change* (July/August 1998) and Barbara Millis, “Becoming an Effective Teacher Using Cooperative Learning: A Personal Odyssey,” *Peer Review* (Spring 2009).

interaction, and individual and group accountability. In every Reacting game students find themselves operating as members of factions or indeterminates who must ally themselves with factions to achieve their objectives. While they have to submit papers and, of course, speak as individuals, to be effective they must coordinate their research and reports with other members of their faction. Factions frequently divide up topics (so that each member of the group is responsible for mastering one area of the political, social, religious, issues etc.) in order to share the workload and then collectively establish the best ways to make proposals and defend their positions. Moreover, the game format creates student pressure within each faction for everyone to attend classes, finish assignments on time, and, most of all, do his or her best since poor individual efforts are detrimental to the entire faction. Finally, the best speeches and papers draw on a breadth of knowledge unlikely to be possessed by any one student, and so successful factions have to weave individual expertise into a unified team effort. Thus faction members have a positive interdependence within the game sessions and have group accountability (frequently with extra points awarded for those factions that are most successful in the game), but also have individual accountability through their individual persuasive essays. The skill to solve problems through collaborative means is a hallmark of adult tasks, whether in the workplace or civic and philanthropic enterprises.

### **Oral and Written Communication**

Writing clearly and speaking well lie at the heart of a college education. Students who have mastered the arts of writing and speaking know how to organize arguments, support them with evidence, and to think critically about the material, themselves, and their audiences. In addition, they learn the importance of clarity and precision. It is not surprising that colleges and universities place great importance on teaching students to write and to speak with clarity, precision, and style.

Jack Meacham and Jerry Gaff, drawing upon a recent national report, *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree*, conclude that there is a “national consensus that communication skills—including college-level writing and effective oral communication—are essential both as foundation skills for college and university learning and as lifelong skills for citizenship and the

professions.”<sup>24</sup> As Derek Bok points out, “Almost everyone agrees on the need to communicate effectively. Curriculum committees regularly affirm the importance of expressing oneself with clarity, precision, and, if possible, style and grace. So do business executives, employers, and political activists. Students, too, share this opinion. In Richard Light’s lengthy interviews with 1,600 undergraduates, for example, respondents mentioned improving their writing three times as often as any other educational goal.”<sup>25</sup>

In “Reacting to the Past” students experience an exuberance of learning that carries over to the mastery of many skills, including writing and speaking. While there is little consensus about how best to teach students how to write and speak well, theorists cite some common factors that contribute to students improving these skills: a heightened sense of audience, an assignment that offers a genuine context for writing, assignments that inspire students to invest time in their work, multiple opportunities to write and speak, and an opportunity to revise. Reacting classes are particularly strong in promoting the first four, though many professors are increasingly building in opportunities for students to revise their written work.

That Reacting improves speaking skills was confirmed in Stroessner’s study. At four different colleges, students in Reacting first-year seminars and in non-Reacting first-year seminars were tested early in the semester. One test provided the student with a small folder of materials on an issue—such as gun control—and asked her to prepare a speech and deliver it into a tape-recorder. A similar test was administered at the end of the semester. The speeches were graded blindly. The Reacting and non-Reacting students had nearly identical scores at the outset of the semester; and the scores of the non-Reacting students were the same at the end. But the students who completed a semester of Reacting had far stronger scores—well beyond statistical significance.

Students in Reacting classes speak and write a great deal, writing on average ten to twelve pages per game and speaking in nearly every class period. The ten-page writing requirement constitutes

---

<sup>24</sup> “Learning Goals in Mission Statements: Implications for Educational Leadership,” *Liberal Education* (Winter 2006): 3.

<sup>25</sup> Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 82.

students' formal writing submitted to the instructor; students write that much and more in e-mail correspondence with their peers, many of them lengthy and well-argued. They are so because the students become passionately engaged; in owning a role, having responsibility for that role and the knowledge needed to make that role effective, students take ownership of their writing. It is theirs; it is important. Reacting students spend countless hours researching and working with their fellow students to present their best case, clearly and powerfully. They do so in part because they have a real audience, one that they want to convince or outwit, one that they know will be critical of their arguments, just waiting to pounce with counter arguments. That audience changes and with the change comes learning to develop different voices in one's writing and appeal to different audiences in different styles and modes.

An argumentative essay and speech based on Aristotelian rhetoric may carry the day in *Athens in 403 B.C.*, but then so may a play in the style of Aristophanes. In the Ming China game, students, heeding the Confucius' teaching that "The thing about the gentleman is that he is anything but casual where speech is concerned" (*Analects*, 118), learn to use allusion and poetry so that "the one who speaks gives no offence, while the one who hears can take warning" (*Analects*, 42). Danton and his fellow revolutionaries quickly learn to use the pungent language of the street to puncture the balanced style of the salon in the French Revolution game. Students, in trying out these different modes of argument, become more reflective about their writing.

Though students are sometimes hesitant to break out of the familiar and safe expository essay format in their writing, "Reacting to the Past" leaves them no other choice. As they take on their characters' perspectives, voices, and motivations, students seem more willing to step out of their own preconceptions about the writing process itself. Where they may have once found it difficult to conjure up a paper topic, students discover that paper topics practically present themselves. For example, a student playing the part of an imperial advisor in Ming China, when faced with the threat of being executed by the Emperor, suddenly knows exactly what he should say, how tactfully he should say it, what evidence should be included, and what's best left unsaid.

Where students may have once found it somewhat tedious to squeeze page requirements out of an idea, in Reacting, they are almost surprised at how the words flow when they are intensely invested in delivering an important message. That same student who in high school may have spent days ruminating on a five-page paper, when playing the role of an imperial advisor may be delighted to discover that a lengthy draft comes easily when she's got something urgent to say and has the freedom to say it creatively.

Where students may have once been skeptical about the need to find and appropriately document source material to support their point, Reacting papers make it abundantly clear how effective good evidence is in bringing credibility to an argument. When making his case to the Emperor, our imperial advisor will be sure to point to what past emperors have done in China, grounding his arguments in the teachings of Confucius, lest he be considered disrespectful of the past and thus scorned by his fellow advisors and perhaps the Emperor himself. And the student will be sure to document the source material and present it in the most polished form possible, lest he be undermined by his fellow students—adversarial imperial advisors looking to discredit his arguments and his style.

In Reacting, students speak and write more than in their other courses; and they do so in contexts where the effectiveness of their writing and speaking mean more than a grade. This motivational difference largely explains their stronger performance.

### **Critical Thinking and the Art of Inquiry**

Higher education authorities agree unanimously that one of the central purposes of liberal education is to teach students to think and to communicate. Regional and professional accrediting agencies list as key outcomes critical thinking, analysis, problem solving, and effective written and oral communication. The AAC&U report, *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (2004), surveyed the accreditation standards of specialized and regional accrediting bodies, scholarly organizations, and examples of skills demanded by industry and found that all called for critical or reflective thinking and problem solving skills. Noting these key outcomes, the assessment movement has

embraced instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment to provide evidence of student achievement in critical thinking. In “Reacting to the Past” courses students repeatedly practice and exercise critical thinking and writing skills.

Both Bok’s study and the LEAP initiative cited above note that critical thinking is a key outcome for undergraduate education. One of the AAC&U report’s key recommendations is to “teach the arts of inquiry and innovation” in a way that moves beyond memorization to “fostering habits of mind that enable students to continue their learning, engage new questions, and reach informed judgments.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed, most colleges and universities have established critical thinking as key components of their general education programs.

But critical thinking is seen by many as more than just a basic skill. Joseph Williams and his collaborators write that effective argumentation—the ability to advance a claim, support it with reasons founded on relevant evidence and to deal with alternative explanations is the essence of civil conversation and thus of democracy.<sup>27</sup> Equally important is the context in which students need to exercise those critical thinking skills, one that reaches beyond black and white answers. Bok argues that students need to learn to analyze and solve problems, while realizing that at the highest level many problems cannot be solved with absolute certainty, thus requiring people to exercise judgment based on the best evidence and reasoning available. At that level, all solutions are provisional, open to revision when new facts or better means of analysis are found.

Colleges clearly value critical thinking; the difficulty is that “many undergraduates are not sufficiently engaged to work conscientiously at their studies,” and that the lack of sufficient motivation “has a significant effect on progress in critical thinking.”<sup>28</sup> Students often flounder when given “messy, unstructured problems” with no clear answers, and need to move beyond relativism to be convinced that critical thinking and reasoned arguments are “of genuine use” in solving and acting upon these types of

---

<sup>26</sup> *College Learning for the New Global Century*, 30.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph M. Williams and Gregory G. Columb, *The Craft of Argument* (New York: Longman, 2002), 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 112.

problems.<sup>29</sup> Yet learning from “messy” and “unstructured” problems is necessary. The AAC&U 2007 report uses similar terminology, stating that students need to be able “to understand and navigate the dramatic forces . . . that directly affect the quality, character, and perils of the world in which we live.” Students need to be driven to analyze complex issues not just as intellectual exercises but so that they can take some responsibility for “the larger good.” The LEAP reports states forthrightly: “In a world of daunting complexity, all students need practice in integrating and applying their learning to challenging questions and real-world problems” in a way that leads students to ask “not just ‘how do we get this done’ but also ‘what is most worth doing?’”<sup>30</sup>

“Reacting to the Past” educates students in critical thinking by requiring them to advance claims and reasons, and to conduct research to develop supporting evidence while also accounting for alternative points of view. Furthermore, Reacting requires students to exercise critical thinking skills within a dramatic context—what Mark Carnes has discussed as liminal moments.<sup>31</sup> Students are presented with “messy” problems that have no clear answers, and through the game and their roles they are motivated to work harder at research and communication than they do in many traditional classrooms. More specifically, Reacting gives students a problem to solve and an audience to persuade. For example:

- In *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens 403 B.C.*, students become citizens of Athens at the end of the long struggle with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. As members of the Athenian Assembly, students try to develop a new government for Athens—will Athens return to a form of democracy or to oligarchy?
- In *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791* students are members of the French National Assembly or the Paris Crowd two years into the revolution, Louis XVI having just been captured after an attempt to flee France. Now the deputies must reconsider all the basic assumptions of their constitutional monarchy.

---

<sup>29</sup> Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 114.

<sup>30</sup> *College Learning for the New Global Century*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Carnes, “Being There: The Liminal Classroom.”

- In *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945* students fulfill the roles of various Indian political and religious groups who meet at Simla to try to write a constitution for an independent India, one that will hold Muslims and Hindus together in one state.

Along with recreating a dramatic moment in history, Reacting games provide students in their roles with specific political and social objectives to be achieved, and students must research the roles and provide arguments and evidence to persuade other factions within the game. In the *Athens in 403 B.C.* game, for example, Oligarchs must craft arguments to persuade the assembly that the electorate should be limited to those who own land, while radical and moderate democrats martial counter-arguments against that idea. Students are also pushed to place these constitutional details in a larger philosophical or ethical context. The Crowd in the *French Revolution* game, for instance, must persuade deputies to give them the vote and bread, but more importantly, they must draw upon Rousseau's writings to convince others that human beings are good and capable of virtue. Conservative clergy and nobles in turn attack direct democracy and advocate monarchy, citing philosophical and theological arguments that men are sinful and need to be controlled.

The games assign students historically significant and intellectually challenging texts they need to mine for information. Many games have a central text to which students on all sides must refer in making their arguments: Plato's *Republic*, Confucius' *Analects*, Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* provide a common grounding for students. But students are then pushed to research beyond the central text and encouraged to bring into the game relevant sources. In the *French Revolution* game, for example, students focus their arguments around Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, but they are also led to consider constitutional documents, speeches, and pamphlets by revolutionary figures of the period, and encouraged to conduct research on the economic, cultural, and political contexts in which their characters act and bring the fruits of that research into their arguments.

The games encourage students to evaluate multiple perspectives on the issues under dispute, and their game roles help students understand how social, economic, religious, political factors determine the

judgments of their characters. A simple listing of roles indicates that in all the games, students are forced to confront multiple opinions and viewpoints. In *India, 1945*, for example, students act as the British Governor General, Hindu and Muslim members of the Indian National Congress, Gandhi adherents, members of the Muslim League, a Sikh leader, princes such as the Nizam of Hyderabad, Dr. Ambedkar, leader of the Untouchables, the Hindu Mahasabha, and representatives of rural India and of the Communist Party.

Beyond simply asking students to seriously engage with multiple and competing perspectives, students also have to think on their feet, to present arguments (oral and written) that respond to constitutional provisions, intellectual claims and arguments made by other students during the game session and in “real time.” The games are structured to involve all students in written and oral communication. They spend more time in developing their arguments, because they will be challenged on the argument in the class and be forced to think about alternative perspectives and counter-arguments and analyze how to respond to them. Student-led classes form constitutional assemblies, church courts, and debating societies, where factions advance arguments to persuade other students of their viewpoints. The key to these debates is that several students are “indeterminates,” assigned to roles set in the time period that do not have firm positions on key issues at the outset. Students in the political or religious factions have to look for the best arguments and forms of presentations to convince these indeterminates to join them in voting.

One Moderate Democrat in *Athens in 403 B.C.*, for example, made an argument for a reconciliation agreement by organizing an essay to support her claim with a series of reasons: taking revenge against the Thirty Tyrants will lead to more violence, peace is necessary to restore the trust of citizens for the government of Athens, and the essence of democracy demands an end to injurious speech. An artisan (indeterminate role) urged that women should be part of the Athenian electorate by advancing three arguments citing Socrates, evidence of women’s behavior in the Athenian homes, and previous decisions taken by the Assembly (see examples of student papers in the Instructor’s manual for *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*). Students are pushed to deeper research and clearer

statements in support of their positions because they realize that other factions will critique their arguments.

Reacting games challenge students. While the most public part of the games are in the class debates where students make both formal and informal speeches and frequently engage in spirited debate, much of the academic work of the course comes in the research and writing that is done outside class and then shared through newspapers, class web-sites, wall displays, and e-mail.

Students invest more emotion and time in the development of their arguments because they are engaged in their roles. Students are more motivated to make arguments and solve problems because they have to make decisions in games that appear to have real consequences. Part of the power of the Reacting games arises from students writing to convince other students and not just to impress instructors. But the games are designed to keep the situation “messy and unstructured.” If students violate their roles or reach for compromises not part of the history, they are pulled back by historical events. French deputies who defy the people of Paris will find that the people may rise up and kill their political opponents. The Muslim League may organize demonstrations that turn violent in Indian cities. While events are controlled by the instructor as “gamemaster,” their complexity and contingency remind students that the problems they are wrestling with were real and had real consequences. These historical recreations have a dramatic effect on students as they strive to find the best solutions to complex problems.

Students explicitly discuss the possibility of alternative results and the nature of causality in the post mortem for each game. Reacting games do frequently diverge from history: Socrates may survive his trial, Lafayette may save a constitutional monarchy in France, and India may dissolve in chaos with no compromise on a Muslim state. But the instructor has the opportunity to underline the critical analysis of the period of history in a post mortem once the game ends. She or he is able to discuss how the historical actors had to make decisions based on imperfect information and help students understand how critical thinking is tied to action.

In sum, “Reacting to the Past” develops critical thinking skills and rational argumentation. But even more significantly, it provides students with the powerful experiences of a “messy and “dramatic”

moment where there are no clear solutions. Students are forced to use critical thinking to navigate the perils of real-world situations in order to confront big questions and negotiate imperfect solutions.

### **Ethical Learning and Empathy**

Most colleges and universities, through their mission statements, suggest the importance of developing a sense of social responsibility among their students. One such statement says the mission of the college is, among other things, to “free the mind of parochialism and prejudice, and prepare students to lead examined lives that are personally satisfying, civically responsible, and socially useful.” Without using the words “moral” or “ethical”, this statement (and many others like it) clearly suggests that one of the core purposes of a college or university education is to help students develop a moral outlook that will inform all the spheres of their lives. The terms “prejudice”, “civically responsible”, and “socially useful” all reflect a moral understanding. On the other hand, our colleges resist inculcating an “absolutist” morality or imposing a morality in a culture which celebrates diversity, including moral diversity.

It is also the case that by understanding the moral values of others can help a person understand his or her own moral values of others, leading to an empathy with those who in many ways are quite different. Understanding the other person as *having* moral values (even if they are in conflict with one’s own) at least establishes a basis for appreciating the life choices of that other person. Assessment of “Reacting to the Past” has clearly demonstrated that students increase in empathy as a result of playing the games (see Appendix 3).

The manner in which Reacting games expose students to multiple moral and cultural viewpoints demonstrates that we have powerful tools for pursuing these outcomes in college classrooms. Institutions do not have so shy away from dealing head-on with moral issues only because there is no universal consensus on the details of various moral outlooks. Using role-playing pedagogy can help students *appreciate* the moral choices, dilemmas, and demands that have confronted human actors in the past and that students themselves will confront in all the venues of their lives both in and after college. Reacting is one solution to the problem posed by Derek Bok when he notes, “students need to develop habits of

thought that will help them to recognize moral problems when they arise and to reason about them carefully enough to arrive at thoughtful decisions on how to respond.”<sup>32</sup> Moral values are an inescapable part of being human and an examined life will bring those values to consciousness, and thereby to the possibility of their reasoned analysis and even sometimes to their alteration.

Exposure to moral dilemmas creates an awareness of the underlying moral values students tacitly accepted when they entered college, even if that acceptance had not always reached the level of full consciousness and critical understanding. All Reacting games in some ways force students to grapple with moral issues that demand understanding the values of others. The ethical reasoning can be explicit, as when the *Henry VIII* game includes a staged debate pitting the practitioners of Machiavellian statecraft against the advocates of humanistic ethics. Or it may rely on individual characters and factions to articulate the values that underlie their political positions. Through Reacting games, students assume roles and so have to understand the values of their characters. Without grasping their characters’ core values, students have no guide as to how their characters would respond. To become a follower of Plato, Confucius, Anne Hutchinson, or Rousseau is to step not only into their historical situation but more importantly into their moral framework. Moral education is at its most meaningful and effective best when it is internalized and integrated into the outlook of the individual person. Intellectual and emotional engagement with the moral perspectives of others is a highly valuable way to entice greater personal reflection on values. Reacting places a student within the mind and value-system of the historical agent. Reacting makes it possible, in a way that is difficult in other forms of pedagogy, for a student to step into another person’s point of view and not only to see, but also to *experience* the character’s values and ethical decision making process.

Many faculty and administrators are wary of “teaching morality and ethics” because such terms are bound up with religious and political beliefs. When does “instruction” in such matters become indoctrination? The asymmetry of the relationship of professors at the podium and students, taking notes, knowing that their work must eventually be graded by those professors, is worrisome. But in Reacting,

---

<sup>32</sup> Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 72n.

students put forth all of the arguments; and the various components of issues are voiced in multiple student roles. Students thus learn that moral and ethical issues have many dimensions; and they are not coerced, however subtly, to take positions based on the views of their professors.

### **Fostering Civic Knowledge and Engagement**

It is a much lamented fact that the level of political participation in America is unhealthily low. The causes, while disputed, lie perhaps in America's founding as a modern, commercial democracy. Such democracies separate state from society; in doing so they invite their citizens to live separate public and private lives. When prosperity is added to in the mix, the private realm becomes alluring, entertaining, all-consuming; while the public realm becomes an intrusion, an irrelevancy, a bore, which Tocqueville sees as one of democracy's defining characteristics.

Some critics claim that America's colleges and universities make only faint attempts at preparing students to be engaged citizens, even if civic engagement is commonly cited as one of the desired outcomes of higher education. Derek Bok recommends that courses in political theory and political science be required of all graduates.<sup>33</sup> But information about the ideas that directed the country's founding and about the structure and workings of the country's current institutions, while helpful, cannot alone instill an interest in public affairs. Students need to experience the exhilaration of politics first-hand if they are to develop a taste for it in later life. They need to discover for themselves the responsibilities and possibilities of power if they are to judge adequately the performance of elected officials.

In Reacting, students gather as members of a public body, usually an assembly or a court. They divide into factions with agendas to advance. They cast votes, pass legislation, and render verdicts. They defend their positions in public, and through cross-examination and debate learn to think on their feet and speak extemporaneously. Some lead, others follow, until, in a new game, positions are reversed. Competition and collaboration are present in about equal measure. In the end, victories are scored, defeats

---

<sup>33</sup> *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 187-8.

are suffered, and history, sometimes, is changed (though with historically counter-factual results identified in the “post-mortems”).

Almost any Reacting game is a political caldron. Even in a game as far removed from democratic politics as *Henry VIII*, students still are members of the Reformation Parliament, with an extensive agenda to enact. They are required to build alliances, broker deals, promote their causes, and be on guard for the unexpected. In the AAC&U LEAP report, principle five declares that “every student should prepare for both life and citizenship by working frequently on unscripted problems.”<sup>34</sup> *Henry VIII*, like all Reacting games, continually startles students with the unexpected, forcing them to reassess, regroup, and start anew. As discussed above, problem-solving is at the heart of Reacting.

*Athens in 403 B.C.*, the *French Revolution*, *India, 1945*, and the *Collapse of Apartheid* are four highly political Reacting games. In the *Athens* game, students are responsible for reconstituting Athenian democracy after Athens’ devastating defeat in the Peloponnesian War. What structure to give the democracy, how far to extend the franchise, whether to resume the imperial policies of the past—these are some of the issues which students are to decide, with two of the factions hostile to democracy and of suspect loyalty. Meanwhile students are jolted by the discovery that ancient and modern democracies are very different regimes. In the *French Revolution* game, students are faced with devising a constitution that balances the old and the new, while struggling to contain the violence of the Parisian crowd. The student playing the Marquis de Lafayette is in a particularly delicate position, with pressure coming from all sides; The political skills needed and developed by the student in this role are of the highest order. In the *India* game, Muslims and Hindus are given one last chance to preserve India as a peaceful, united country without collapsing into violent civil war and ethnic cleansing. In the *Collapse of Apartheid* game, students have to balance the need to confront and correct the past injustices of apartheid while laying plans for a new country in which former masters and servants live and act as political equals.

A game on the American Constitutional Convention is now in development, and promises to provide students with detailed knowledge of the fundamentals of constitution-making (much like study of

---

<sup>34</sup> *College Learning for the New Global Century*, 36.

a foreign language teaches students grammar), as well as the political history that brought the American Constitution into being.

## **Global Citizenship**

American education must increasingly turn American students into active, effective, and aware citizens, leaders even, in a future in which global forces, problems, and crises increasingly are the context for their social, economic, and cultural lives, a context that presses ever closer on the individual with each passing decade.

Research on global learning points the way for administrators to make Reacting a solution to the problem of global learning, and for game developers to make their games part of the solution. This discussion will refer to two studies in particular, and a third in passing: *College Learning for the New Global Century* (AAC&U, 2007), and *Shared Futures: Global Learning and Liberal Education* (AAC&U, 2006).

To understand what is meant today by the term “global learning,” it is helpful to look at the historical origins of the concept. This is provided by Kevin Hovland in *Shared Futures: Global Learning and Liberal Education* (AAC&U, 2006). The *Shared Futures* study has found that, despite the overwhelming consensus among American universities that global learning is an essential—perhaps *the* essential—component of liberal education, very few colleges have taken effective steps to incorporate this view into their curriculum. *Shared Futures* found that

- Global awareness requirements within general education are overwhelmingly satisfied by a single non-Western culture distribution course, avoiding interdependence as an object of study itself, thus reinforcing a fractured view of the global community.
- Within general education, domestic diversity requirements and global awareness requirements are seen as discrete, unlinked units, reinforcing the idea that the United States somehow stands outside of global analysis.

- There is little evidence that students are provided with multiple, robust, interdisciplinary learning opportunities at increasing levels of intellectual challenges to ensure that students acquire the global learning professed in the mission statement.
- Science is largely missing as a site for global learning.

Responding to these failures, *Shared Futures* suggests that as a working agenda for global learning, liberal education should be infused with global learning so that their education will help students navigate an increasingly complex and interdependent world. Of these the four major goals are as follows:

- Students should be immersed in the big issues affecting the peoples of the world today.
- They should learn by doing, that is, by being given the opportunity to try to solve these problems.
- Since no global problem worth the name is going to be dented by the efforts of any one individual (not even with the help of high explosives), students should learn to work in groups to solve these problems.
- Since solving real problems means bringing to bear on them the perspectives of the sciences and technologies, students should learn how to use not only cultural critical thinking, but scientific analysis when confronted by difficult real world problems.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Reacting games dealing with recent history place students in the midst of an historical crisis involving “big issues” like interethnic conflict, poverty, management of scarce resources, and environmental degradation, where they have to work in teams drawing on cultural knowledge, social scientific research, historical understanding, and scientific expertise. Reacting students learn by doing, instead of by watching and listening. A traditional lecture on environmental issues trains students to be passive and to talk about problems rather than trying to solve them. Reacting gives them problems to solve.

As currently implemented in the curriculum, global learning often consists of a single course that adopts a cultural perspective. Such a course can produce a spirit of relativism that views all opinions as

equally valuable (or valueless) even while it pursues global understanding and subverts ethnocentricity. Reacting, on the other hand, makes students realize that some solutions work and others do not. Moreover, students are forced to recognize that in response to external pressures decisions have to be made and actions taken even in the face of competing interests and imperfect information. The “test and paper” format of global learning lecture courses often creates the false sense that victory over difficult problems comes from individual efforts and not from the cooperative work of a problem-solving team. Success in Reacting games comes from teamwork.

Games set in the past can also point students to present-day global issues by supplementing the games with an additional unit on applying historical lessons learned to present problems. For example, after the Second Crusade game has been played, instructors encourage students to reflect on what “just war” means today, especially since many people in the Middle East today view what the United States is doing there today through the lens of the Crusades. Obviously the *India, 1945* game raises questions about creating democracy in a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual state, as well as provides a chance to consider what is happening within India and between India and Pakistan today. Nearly all Reacting games raise vital issues about today’s global problems, and these are explored as a matter of course during the games’ post-mortem sessions.<sup>35</sup>

Administrators looking for a solution to the problems of reforming their curriculum to globalize learning should consider Reacting. Reacting games provide classroom-based solutions to the problem of fostering global learning and achieving the outcomes called for by the AAC&U.<sup>36</sup> New Reacting games under development promise to provide an even wider range of options for faculty interested in global learning.

---

<sup>35</sup> Professor Gretchen McKay, McDaniel College, letter to Richard Powers.

<sup>36</sup> The AAC&U also has suggested ways to assess the global learning outcomes in *Assessing Global Learning* (2007).

## V. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND THE FUTURE OF “REACTING TO THE PAST”

### **Reacting and the General Education Curriculum**

Reacting is currently being used as a major component of the general education curriculum at schools across the country. A select overview demonstrates the range of schools that have found success with the pedagogy.

*Reacting as First Year Seminar: Barnard College and Drake University*

“Reacting to the Past” originated as a first-year seminar option at Barnard College with three games taught in one semester: *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*; *Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, 1587*; and *The Trial of Anne Hutchinson*. Barnard’s first-year seminars “focus on critical reading, writing, and speaking skills in the context of intellectual exploration and social bonding in a shared first-year experience.” Currently seminars are grouped in interdisciplinary clusters: “Reinventing Literary History” and “Special Topics”, as well as “Reacting to the Past”. Barnard also uses Reacting games in an optional second semester course offered through the history department.

Drake University also offers Reacting sections as one of many options available in a first-year seminar program, in which each faculty instructor chooses their own topic. Drake’s instructors have generally paired two games instead of three in order to have more class time to work on skills such as writing, or on themes to connect the games, most often relating games to the development of democracy using the *French Revolution* or *Athens in 403 B.C.* and *India, 1945* games. Drake also offers Reacting options within a sophomore-level “Engaged Citizen” course, currently using the *French Revolution* and *Collapse of Apartheid* games; as well as in some Ethics and English Literature courses.

*Reacting across a range of general education, honors, and major programs*

Queens College (CUNY) uses Reacting in a variety of ways: in first- and second-year honors courses, in two-course and three-course learning communities that fulfill the general education

requirements, in required English Composition courses, in advanced courses for majors, and in two- and four-week Study Abroad courses. In the two-course learning community the class is evenly divided between English Language Learner students, who have just been brought up to the level where they can take the English Composition required course, and entering spring semester freshmen. Reacting games have also been taught in Philosophy, History, Drama, World Studies, Anthropology, and Comparative Literature courses. A Reacting course is also offered at Townsend Harris High School which abuts the Queens campus, and with whom Queens has an articulation agreement.

Loras College has embedded the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy into a general education course required of all students. The course, Democracy and Global Diversity (LIB220), is a sophomore level course and represents one of two required courses within the “Mission” category of the College’s general education curriculum. Currently Loras is the only college or university that requires all students to participate in Reacting role-playing simulations. The Liberal Arts 220 course examines two distinct cultures at a point of crisis and compares how each responds to the demands of democracy. The course is designed to play a key role in a Loras College education by promoting the College’s mission to make students into responsible contributors to society through fostering reflective thinking and ethical decision-making about democracy using active learning techniques. Since LIB220 focuses on democracy and the maintenance and creation of social and political order, the course employs those Reacting games involving democracy and exposing the difficulties involved in the maintenance and creation of social and political order. Thus Loras faculty have paired the *French Revolution* or *Athens in 403 B.C.* game with *India, 1945* or *The Collapse of Apartheid*.

#### *Reacting and interdisciplinary options at a research institution*

“Reacting to the Past” has become the signature course in the Liberal Arts Honors Program (LAH) at the University of Texas at Austin. Honors faculty teach one to two sections of Reacting for LAH first-year students each semester drawing upon three games: *Athens in 403 B.C.*, *Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, 1587*, and the *French Revolution*. About half of the LAH freshmen choose to take the course, and Reacting has helped recruit students to the program, since

they use Reacting as the class that prospective students and their parents attend when visiting the campus.

In 2006 students lobbied to have an upper division LAH Reacting class, and thus the program added a class for the juniors and seniors, so far featuring two games, *Henry VIII and the Reformation Parliament* and *India, 1945*. Though Reacting has found a home in the LAH program, it has also spread to other areas within the university. The *India, 1945* game, for example, is regularly taught in a sophomore world literature class and an introductory philosophy class. Professor of English Eric Mallin has also developed a game based on Shakespeare and Marlowe that he has taught in his Shakespeare class for the past three years.

### **New Games and Coherent Sequences of Reacting Courses**

When the Reacting Advisory Board began thinking about “Reacting to the Past” as an approach to general education, the most obvious obstacle was the relatively small number (six) of games in existence. An important goal was to expand that number so that the requisite sequences of Reacting courses could be turned into general education curricula. The curriculum development efforts of the RAB succeeded beyond all expectations. The number of published and/or tested Reacting games has more than tripled; when games currently approved for development are ready for publication and dissemination, the number will have quadrupled in just two years.

The explosion of Reacting games has made it possible to think now of a variety of Reacting sequences that could provide a solution to general education needs in the sciences, in American history, and in global learning. There are now nine games published by Pearson Education:

1. *Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, 1587*
2. *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945*
3. *Henry VIII and the Reformation Parliament*
4. *Rousseau, Burke and Revolution in France, 1791*
5. *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*
6. *The Trial of Anne Hutchinson*

7. *The Trial of Galileo: Aristotelianism, the “New Cosmology,” and the Catholic Church, 1616-33*
8. *Charles Darwin, the Copley Medal, and the Rise of Naturalism, 1862-64*
9. *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775-76*

Ten more games (as yet unpublished) are complete, available for download at through an online faculty forum (discussion board), and have been widely played and tested:

10. *Beware the Ides of March: Rome in 44 BCE*
11. *The Collapse of Apartheid and Dawn of Democracy in South Africa*
12. *Constantine and the Council of Nicaea: 325 CE*
13. *Forest Diplomacy: War and Peace on the Colonial Frontier*
14. *Greenwich Village, 1913: Suffrage, Labor, and the New Woman*
15. *Kansas, 1999: Evolution and Creation Science*
16. *Marlowe and Shakespeare, 1592*
17. *The Second Crusade: The War Council of Acre, 1148*
18. *The Struggle for Civil Rights: Birmingham to Memphis, 1963-66*
19. *The Trial of Antonio Gramsci*

Thus nineteen Reacting games are currently being played at colleges across the country. And there are more to come. In 2009, the Reacting Advisory Board approved eleven more games for development (most with grant-supported funding):

20. *Acid Rain in Europe*
21. *Rage Against the Machine: Technology, Rebellion, and the Industrial Revolution*
22. *Petrograd 1917*
23. *Kentucky 1861: A Nation in the Balance*
24. *1688: Revolution, Coup or Royal Renegotiation?*
25. *America's Founding: The Constitutional Convention*
26. *Modernism vs. Traditionalism: Art in Paris, 1888-89*
27. *King or Commonwealth? The English Civil War, 1647–1652*

28. *Defining the Mind: The APA in the 1970s*

29. *Red Clay 1835: Cherokee Removal*

30. *The Josianic Reform: Deuteronomy, Prophecy, and Israelite Religion*

31. *Living History in 1894 Korea: The Kabo Reforms*: This game, by John Duncan and Jennifer Jung-Kim, received funding from UCLA and the Korea Foundation.

Thus it is now possible for college curriculum committees to plan coherent sequences of courses based on such themes as science, religion, historical periods, or national history. For example:

- Science: Galileo, Darwin, Creationism in Kansas, *Defining the Mind* (psychology), and *Acid Rain in Europe* games.
- Religion: Council of Nicaea, Josianic Reform (Judaism), Second Crusade, and *Anne Hutchinson* games.
- Developing Democratic Constitutions and/or Nation Building: Athens, Confucianism, Henry VIII, English Civil War, American Revolution, Constitutional Convention, French Revolution, India, and *Collapse of Apartheid* games.
- Ancient/Medieval History: Athens, Rome, Confucianism (Ming China), Council of Nicaea, and Second Crusade games.
- Non-Western History: India, *Collapse of Apartheid*, Korea: *Kabo Reforms* game.
- Civil Rights: India, *Collapse of Apartheid*, *Civil Rights/Birmingham to Memphis* games.
- Gender: *Greenwich Village, 1913* and *Defining the Mind* games.
- Art and Literature: Shakespeare and Marlowe, *Greenwich Village, 1913*, and *Art in Paris* games.
- Reacting as a skills sequence in Writing and Oral Communications.

## **The Future of Reacting: Mini-Games, Science, and U.S. History**

One of the interesting effects of teaching Reacting games is that it stimulates faculty to use the Reacting model to create games that fit the content and schedule of their own courses. Often these games use fewer class periods and thus are referred to at Reacting meetings as mini-games (jocularly referred to as “Wee-Acting”)—short games of one- to four-class sessions that can be embedded in existing general education or departmental major courses. For example, one instructor has split the *Athens in 403 B.C.* game into three short mini-games to follow the sequence of a general education foundations course, so the students first play Athenians writing a constitution, then deciding who should vote in Athens, and then finally debating how government expenses should be met.

Faculty at Elon University have developed shorter science games to fit within their curriculum. In conjunction with project staff at Barnard College, the Reacting Advisory Board has been discussing ways to create an on-line community that shares these mini-games through the central Reacting web site. More importantly, a team led by David Henderson (Trinity College), Anthony W. Crider (Elon University), and Hugh T. Daughtrey, Jr., (James Madison University) has received a 2009 National Science Foundation award to develop more such Reacting games to promote general education in the sciences.

The Reacting Advisory Board is now working with one of the most experienced hands at game development, Nick Proctor of Simpson College, to explore development of an American history text centered on a sequence of Reacting games covering the entire span of American history from the Puritans to the modern civil rights and environmental movements.<sup>37</sup>

Faculty who are interested in following or contributing to the new developments in mini-games, science, and U.S. History, should keep an eye on the Reacting website, <<http://www.barnard.edu/reacting>>, and particularly the restricted-access online Faculty Forum. Colleges

---

<sup>37</sup> One possible sequence has been envisioned by combining the various American History games published and in development: *Anne Hutchinson*, *Forest Diplomacy*, *Revolution in New York City*, *Constitutional Convention*, *Kentucky 1861*, *Impeachment of Andrew Johnson* (in early stages of development), *Greenwich Village, 1913*, *FDR's Hundred Days* (in early stages of development), *Struggle for Civil Rights*, and the *Creationism/Kansas 1999* game, ten in all. In addition to those full-length games currently published or in development, new smaller games on areas such as Abolition and ante-bellum reform, a Robber Baron game, a Cold War game, and one on current issues of Globalism, could also be developed.

should note, however, that in our survey of faculty, 63% indicated that conferences, particularly the annual summer institute at Barnard College in New York, are the best way for faculty to learn about the pedagogy. At the conferences, experienced faculty instructors lead participants through the “student experience” of playing entire games in two-day formats. This direct experience of “Reacting to the Past” gives faculty and administrators the best orientation to the power and possibilities of the methodology and connects them to a community of scholar teachers who willingly share ideas about how to improve student engagement and learning.

## **VI. CONCLUSION: THE “REACTING TO THE PAST” COMMUNITY AND THE STRENGTHENING OF LIBERAL EDUCATION**

Nearly all faculty who participate in a “Reacting to the Past” game are instinctively drawn to the potential of the pedagogy to improve undergraduate teaching and learning. As discussed above, multiple studies have now confirmed the impact of Reacting on student learning. The skills and dispositions that students develop in Reacting courses are the same skills in critical thinking, rhetorical ability, integrative learning, intercultural understanding, and global awareness that are called for by the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ LEAP project and by most college mission statements.

“Reacting to the Past” provides individual faculty and general education programs with multiple tools for enhancing student engagement in learning. According to the Faculty Survey (see appendix 2), wider adoption of Reacting faces some of the same challenges as any active-learning pedagogy: some faculty fear losing content in a course or are uncomfortable with pedagogy that requires giving up some control in the classroom. But the faculty who have experimented with the games overwhelmingly endorse their rigor and effectiveness. The games now have been successfully used in a variety of institutions and across the full range of course offerings from first year seminars that orient students learning in higher education to Honors programs which provide academic challenges to the most gifted students. Curriculum committees can cite this evidence to initiate discussions and develop courses or sequences of courses using Reacting games in order to develop basic skills and/or to pursue interdisciplinary themes.

Moreover, the “Reacting to the Past” project staff has fostered the emergence a vibrant community that goes beyond the published games. Affiliated faculty regularly attend workshops and run them for faculty and administrators at nearby institutions; they collaborate with game designers to develop and improve games; and they work with administrators to devise creative curricular applications. The promise of “Reacting to the Past” is great; the challenge is to find a way to sustain this broad pedagogical movement across college and university lines. Barnard College, with two initial FIPSE grants

as well as the current support of the Teagle Foundation, National Science Foundation, and other organizations, continues to provide the basic infrastructure for the Reacting project. Several other universities have helped to support regional conferences. The future of Reacting depends on growing and sustaining this informal community, by providing multiple opportunities for face-to-face contact as well as sharing resources and insights on-line. Administrators and faculty who investigate giving Reacting a key role in their general education, honors, or major programs have a large group of experienced instructors ready to help them achieve the full potential of “Reacting to the Past” as an approach to strengthen liberal education and enhance student learning.

## APPENDIX 1. DESCRIPTIONS OF THE “REACTING TO THE PAST” GAMES

### A. Games Available from Pearson Education / Prentice Hall

#### *Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, 1587*

**Daniel K. Gardner and Mark C. Carnes**

Introduces undergraduate students to the suppleness and power of Confucian thought as applied to issues of governance during the Ming dynasty. The game is set in the Hanlin Academy, where most students are members of the Grand Secretariat of the Hanlin Academy, the body of top-ranking graduates of the civil service examination who serve as advisers to the Wanli emperor. Some Grand Secretaries are Confucian “purists,” who hold that tradition obliges the emperor to name his first-born son as successor; others, in support of the most senior of the Grand Secretaries, maintain that it is within the emperor’s right to choose his successor; and still others, as they decide this matter among many issues confronting the empire, continue to scrutinize the teachings of Confucianism for guidance. The game unfolds amidst the secrecy and intrigue within the walls of the Forbidden City, as scholars struggle to apply Confucian precepts to a dynasty in peril.

*About the Authors:* Daniel K. Gardner is Professor of Chinese History at Smith College and the author of many books and articles on the Confucian and Neo-Confucian tradition in China. His most recent book is *Zhu Xi’s Reading of the Analects: Canon, Commentary, and the Classical Tradition* (Columbia University Press, 2003). Mark C. Carnes is Ann Whitney Olin Professor of History at Barnard College and creator of “Reacting to the Past.” He is author of many books in American history, including *The American Nation* (Longman). He is also General Editor of the 25-volume *American National Biography*, published by the ACLS and Oxford University Press.

#### *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945*

**Ainslie T. Embree and Mark C. Carnes**

Set at Simla, in the foothills of the Himalayas, where the British viceroy has invited leaders of various religious and political constituencies to work out the future of Britain’s largest colony. Will the British transfer power to the Indian National Congress, which claims to speak for all Indians? Or will a separate Muslim state—Pakistan—be carved out of India to be ruled by Muslims, as the Muslim League proposes? And what will happen to the vulnerable minorities—such as the Sikhs and untouchables—or the hundreds of princely states? As British authority wanes, smoldering tensions among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs increasingly flare into violent riots that threaten to ignite all India. Towering above it all is the frail but formidable figure of Gandhi, whom some revere as an apostle of non-violence and others regard as a conniving Hindu politician. Students struggle to reconcile religious identity with nation-building—perhaps the most intractable and important issue of the modern world. Texts include the literature of Hindu revival (Chatterjee, Tagore, and Tilak); the Koran and the literature of Islamic nationalism (Iqbal); and the writings of Ambedkar, Nehru, Jinnah, and Gandhi.

*About the Authors:* Ainslie T. Embree is Professor of History Emeritus at Columbia University and former president of American Institute of Asian Studies and of the Association of Asian Studies. He also served as Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the American Embassy in Delhi. His books include *India’s Search for National Identity* (1972), *Imagining India* (1989), and *Utopias in Conflict: Religion and Nationalism in India* (1990). He was also editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia of Asian History* (1988). See above for Mark C. Carnes.

## ***Henry VIII and the Reformation Parliament*** **J. Patrick Coby**

Transforms students into lords and commoners and members of the English parliament during the tumultuous years of 1529-1536. Cardinal Wolsey has just been dismissed as Lord Chancellor for failing to obtain from the pope the divorce king Henry is seeking from Catherine of Aragon, his wife of twenty years. Thomas More is named as Wolsey's replacement. More presides over a newly summoned parliament, which the king hopes will somehow find the legal means to annul his marriage to Catherine, thus allowing him to proceed with his plans to marry Anne Boleyn and have by her a male heir. But will parliament find the means, and will it be satisfied with solving the king's marital and dynastic problems?

There are some in parliament who wish to use the royal divorce, as well as the rising anticlericalism in the land, to effect a split from Rome and a conversion of England from Catholicism to Protestantism. Other members oppose the divorce, oppose making the king head of the English church, and, most of all, oppose this new, heretical creed filtering in from the continent. More is their leader, for as long as he can survive. Thomas Cromwell leads the king's party. One problem is that the king is ambivalent about the reform effort unleashed by his so called "great matter," and so the conservatives are free to prosecute reformers as heretics, while the reformers are free to prosecute conservatives as traitors. Conservatives are liable to this charge because their frustration at home tempts them to consider petitioning the king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor to invade England on behalf of Catholic Europe. The game reaches its dramatic climax around the trial of Anne Boleyn, staged as a grand contest between opposing parties, in which parties actually are multiple and fluid. All roles are individualized and most are historically based. At issue is the clash of four contending ideas: medieval Catholicism, Lutheranism, Renaissance humanism, and Machiavellian statecraft. Students read works representative of all traditions.

*About the Author:* J. Patrick Coby is professor of Government at Smith College where he teaches courses in political theory. He is author of two books: *Socrates and the Sophistic Enlightenment: A Commentary on Plato's Protagoras*, and *Machiavelli's Romans: Liberty and Greatness in the Discourses on Livy*; and of over eighty articles and reviews.

## ***Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791*** **Mark C. Carnes and Gary Kates**

Plunges students into the intellectual, political, and ideological currents that surged through revolutionary Paris in the summer of 1791. Students are leaders of major factions within the National Assembly (and in the streets outside) as it struggles to create a constitution amidst internal chaos and threats of foreign invasion. Will the king retain power? Will the priests of the Catholic Church obey the "general will" of the National Assembly or the dictates of the pope in Rome? Do traditional institutions and values constitute restraints on freedom and individual dignity or are they its essential bulwarks? Are slaves, women, and Jews entitled to the "rights of man"? Is violence a legitimate means of changing society or of purging it of dangerous enemies? In wrestling with these issues, students consult Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, among other texts.

*About the Authors:* Gary Kates is Professor of History at Pomona College. He is the author of *The Cercle Social, the Girondins, and the French Revolution* (Princeton, 1985) and editor of *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies* (New York, 1998). He has served on the editorial board of French Historical Studies. In 1995 the Knight-Ridder News Service named his book, *Monsieur d'Eon is a Woman: A Tale of Sexual Masquerade and Political Intrigue*, as one of the top non-fiction books of that year. See above for Mark C. Carnes.

***The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.***  
**Josiah Ober and Mark C. Carnes**

Recreates the intellectual dynamics of one of the most formative periods in the human experience. After nearly three decades of war, Sparta crushed democratic Athens, destroyed its great walls and warships, occupied the city, and installed a brutal regime, “the Thirty Tyrants.” The excesses of the tyrants resulted in civil war and, as the game begins, they have been expelled and the democracy restored. But doubts about democracy remain, expressed most ingeniously by Socrates and his young supporters. Will Athens retain a political system where all decisions are made by an Assembly of 6,000 or so citizens? Will leaders continue to be chosen by random lottery? Will citizenship be broadened to include slaves who fought for the democracy and foreign-born metics who paid taxes in its support? Will Athens rebuild its long walls and warships and again extract tribute from city-states throughout the eastern Mediterranean? These and other issues are sorted out by a polity fractured into radical and moderate democrats, oligarchs, and Socratics, among others. The debates are informed by Plato’s *Republic*, as well as excerpts from Thucydides, Xenophon, and other contemporary sources. By examining democracy at its threshold, the game provides the perspective to consider its subsequent evolution.

*About the Authors:* Josiah Ober is Constantine Mitsotakis Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University, where he holds joint appointments in the departments of Political Science and Classics. He is the author of several books on classical Athenian political and intellectual history, most recently *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens* (Princeton University Press). He is now working on a project about the relationship between democratic political culture and the social circulation of knowledge. See above for Mark C. Carnes.

***The Trial of Anne Hutchinson: Liberty, Law, and Intolerance in Puritan New England***  
**Michael P. Winship and Mark C. Carnes**

Recreates one of the most tumultuous and significant episodes in early American history: the struggle between the followers and allies of John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and those of Anne Hutchinson, a strong-willed and brilliant religious dissenter. The controversy pushed Massachusetts to the brink of collapse and spurred a significant exodus. The puritans who founded Massachusetts were poised between the Middle Ages and the modern world, and in many ways, they helped to bring the modern world into being. The game plunges participants into a religious world that will be unfamiliar to many of them. Yet the puritans’ passionate struggles over how far they could tolerate a diversity of religious opinions in a colony committed to religious unity were part of a larger historical process that led to religious freedom and the modern concept of separation of church and state. Their vehement commitment to their liberties and fears about the many threats these faced were passed down to the American Revolution and beyond.

*About the Authors:* Michael P. Winship is Professor of History at the University of Georgia and the author of the highly acclaimed *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton, 2002), the definitive study of Hutchinson and the controversies around her. See above for Mark C. Carnes.

***The Trial of Galileo: Aristotelianism, the New Cosmology, and the Catholic Church, 1616–33***  
**Frederick Purnell, Jr., Michael S. Pettersen, and Mark C. Carnes**

The new science, as brilliantly propounded by Galileo Galilei, collides with the elegant cosmology of Aristotle, Aquinas, and medieval Scholasticism. The game is set in Rome in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Most of the debates occur within the Holy Office, the arm of the papacy that supervises the Roman Inquisition. At times action shifts to the palace of Prince Cesi, founder of the Society of the Lynx-Eyed that promotes the new science, and to the lecture halls of the Jesuit

Collegio Romano. Some students assume roles as faculty of the Collegio Romano and the secular University of Rome, the Sapienza. Others are Cardinals who seek to defend the faith from resurgent Protestantism, the imperial ambitions of the Spanish monarch, the schemes of the Medici in Florence, and the crisis of faith throughout Christendom. Some embrace the “new cosmology,” some denounce it, and still others are undecided. The issues range from the nature of faith and the meaning of the Bible to the scientific principles and methods as advanced by Copernicus, Kepler, Tycho Brahe, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo. Central texts include Aristotle’s *On the Heavens* and *Posterior Analytics*; Galileo’s *Starry Messenger* (1610), *Letter to Grand Duchess Christina* (1615) and *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems* (1632); the declarations of the Council of Trent; and the Bible.

*About the Authors:* Frederick Purnell, Jr. was Professor of Philosophy at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. A specialist in Renaissance and early modern thought, he published numerous articles based on his research in European libraries and archives. His work emphasized the relationship between philosophy and science in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with particular attention to thinkers with ties to Galileo Galilei. The game is dedicated to the memory of Professor Purnell, a fine scholar, committed teacher, and unabashed lover of Rome. Michael S. Pettersen is Associate Professor and Chair of Physics at Washington and Jefferson College. He has published scientific work in the area of low temperature physics. A strong proponent of general science education, he has taught a variety of courses for non-science students, including astronomy. See above for Mark C. Carnes.

***Charles Darwin, the Copley Medal, and the Rise of Naturalism, 1862–1864***  
**Marsha Driscoll, Elizabeth S. Dunn, Dann P. Siems, and Kamran Swanson**

Thrusts students into the intellectual ferment of Victorian England just after publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Since its appearance in 1859, Darwin’s long awaited treatise in “genetic biology” had received reviews both favorable and damning. Thomas Huxley, the famous biologist, and Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, debated the book in a dramatic and widely publicized face-off at the 1860 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Oxford. Their encounter sparked a vigorous, complex debate in the Royal Society, Great Britain’s most important scientific body. Should it award Darwin the Copley Medal, its most prestigious prize? While the action takes place in meetings of the Royal Society, a parallel and influential public argument smoldered over the nature of science and its relationship to modern life in an industrial society.

The Darwin game illustrates the tension between natural and teleological views of the world, manifested especially in reconsideration of the design argument commonly known through William Paley’s *Natural Theology or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (1802) and updated by Wilberforce. But the scientific debate also percolates through a host of related issues: the meaning and purposes of inductive and hypothetical speculation in science; the professionalization of science; the implications of Darwinism for social reform, racial theories, and women’s rights; and the evolving concept of causation in science and its implications for public policy. Because of the revolutionary potential of Darwin’s ideas, the connections between science and nearly every other aspect of culture becomes increasingly evident. Scientific papers and laboratory demonstrations presented in Royal Society meetings during the game provide the backdrop for momentous conflict that continues to shape our perceptions of modern science.

*About the Authors:* Marsha Driscoll is Associate Professor of Psychology at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, MN. Her scholarly interests include the nature and role of cognitive and affective empathy, adult development, and the interdisciplinary connections of psychology to the other social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. Elizabeth E. Dunn is Professor of History at Bemidji State University. Her primary field of study is American Intellectual History, with research and publications centered on value conflicts in a variety of settings including Benjamin Franklin’s religious beliefs, paper money in colonial America, and political campaigning in the nineteenth century. Dann P. Siems is Assistant Professor of Biology at Bemidji State University. His research interests include the natural

history of fishes, phenotypic plasticity in life history theory, relationship of ontogeny to phylogeny, history, and philosophy of biology, role of behavior and cognition in evolution, and evolutionary psychology. B. Kamran Swanson is an Instructor of Philosophy at Oakton Community College and Harold Washington College in the Chicago area. His studies have focused on the philosophy of Benedict Spinoza and early modern philosophies of science.

***Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775–1776***

**Bill Offutt**

Draws students into the political and social chaos of a revolutionary New York City, where patriot and loyalist forces argued and fought for advantage among a divided populace. Can students realize the liminal world of chaos, disruption, loss of privacy, and fear of victimization that comes with any revolution accompanied by violence? How do both the overall outcome and the intermediate “surprises” that reflect the shift of events in 1775-76 demonstrate the role of contingency in history? Could the Brits still win? What were the complexities, strengths, and weaknesses of the arguments on both sides? How were these affected by the social circumstances in which the Revolution occurred? Students engage with the ideological foundations of revolution and government through close readings of Locke, Paine, and other contemporary arguments. Each student’s ultimate victory goal is to have his/her side in control of New York City at the end of 1776 (not as of the end of the Revolution, when all know who won), as well as to achieve certain individual goals (e.g., slaves can attain freedom, propertied women can be granted voting rights, laborers can make deals for land). Winning requires the ability to master the high political arguments for and against revolution as well as the low political skills of logrolling, bribery, and threatened force. Military force often determines the winner, much to the surprise of the students who concentrated merely on internal game politics.

*About the Author:* Bill Offutt is Director of the Pforzheimer Honors College and Associate Professor of History at Pace University. His book, *Of Good Laws and Good Men: Law and Society in the Delaware Valley 1680-1710*, was published in 1995. His academic interests focus on the relationship between law and society, particularly the methods by which legal systems obtain and keep their legitimacy. He has taught classes in colonial America, revolutionary America, the Civil War, Constitutional history, and American women’s history.

## **B. Games in Development (available to download)**

### ***Beware the Ides of March: Rome in 44 BCE***

**Carl A. Anderson and T. Keith Dix**

Recreates the struggle for power and control of Rome following the assassination of Julius Caesar. The assassins, who believed they were liberating Rome from a tyrant, had no plan for setting the Roman state in order again. For them, Caesar's removal was the remedy Rome needed, and the future would take of itself. The game begins the day after the assassination, and most of the action takes place in the Senate. Students are assigned roles as members of two principal factions, "Republicans" and "Caesarians" (the larger faction in the game, since Caesar had "packed" the Senate), or as non-partisan, or at least uncommitted, members of the Senate. Probable debates in the Senate fall under four general headings: public order, Caesar's powers, foreign policy, and government. Some specific issues are whether Caesar should be honored with a public funeral or his body cast into the Tiber; whether to accept the legitimacy of Caesar's acts; whether to regard the assassins as liberators or murderers; whether new elections should be held; and whether the Parthian campaign should go forward and under whose leadership. Students base their game personalities and their arguments in the Senate on excerpts from Cicero's letters, orations and political writings, in particular *de re publica*, as well as other ancient sources. By grappling with the complex issues of Roman power politics at a moment of crisis, students gain perspective on the dynamics of late Republican Roman history and can evaluate Rome's subsequent evolution.

*About the Authors:* Carl A. Anderson is Associate Professor in the Department of French, Classics, and Italian at Michigan State University. He teaches Latin, Greek, and classical literature in translation. His research specialties are Greek comedy and history. T. Keith Dix is Associate Professor in the Department of Classics at the University of Georgia. He teaches Latin, Greek, and classical literature in translation. His research specialties are Latin literature and ancient libraries.

### ***The Collapse of Apartheid and the Dawn of Democracy in South Africa, 1993***

**John C. Eby and Fred Morton**

Situates students in the Multiparty Negotiating Process that took place at the World Trade Center in Kempton Park, South Africa, in 1993. The object of the talks, and the object of the game, is to arrive at a consensus for a new constitution for a new post-apartheid South Africa in the midst of tremendous social anxiety and violence. Just as the cultural setting of South Africa was immensely diverse, so also is the game. Racial diversity—white, black, Indian—is only one dimension of diversity; in fact, by the time of the talks, racial diversity was less critical than were cultural, economic, and political differences. The game, then, requires students to seek to build consensus in the midst of profoundly puzzling complexity and a web of surprising alliances. The game focuses on the problem of how to transition a society conditioned to profound inequalities, harsh political repression, and great social and cultural diversity to a democratic, egalitarian system of governance. How, in other words, should a society shape itself ethically? Because the issues are complex and not strictly racial, the game forces students to ponder carefully the meaning of democracy as a concept. They are typically surprised at what they find—that justice and equality are not always comfortable bed partners with liberty and that healthy democracy may sometimes not be best expressed through counting votes even though universal suffrage was one of the most important symbols of new democratic beginnings for South Africa. Indeed, they learn the important lesson that democracy in a diverse setting requires creative collaboration, compromise, and consensus building more than vote-gathering. Students engage in questions of justice based in principles established in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, the Freedom Charter of 1953, and the writings of Stephen Biko and Nelson Mandela; many parties also have their own key texts (such as Gandhi, Marx, or Mill) from which some of their principles derive.

*About the Authors:* John C. Eby is an associate professor of history at Loras College. Fred Morton is a specialist in the history of South Africa and Botswana. He taught at the University of Botswana and Loras College and has co-authored four books and published numerous articles on Botswana and South Africa, with particular reference to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

***Constantine and the Council of Nicaea: Defining Orthodoxy and Heresy in Christianity, 325 CE***  
**David E. Henderson and Frank Kirkpatrick**

Plunges students into the theological debates confronting early Christian Church leaders. Emperor Constantine has just declared Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire, but now discovers that Christians do not agree on the most fundamental aspects of their beliefs. Some Christians have resorted to violence, battling over which group has the correct theology. Constantine is outraged that he has to settle what he regards as petty disputes between factions. Hoping to settle these problems at a great Church Council to be held in Nicaea, Constantine has invited all of the Bishops of the Church to attend. The outcome of this conference will shape the future of Christianity for millennia. The first order of business is to agree on a Creed which states the core theology of the Church and to which all future Christians will have to subscribe if they are to be regarded as holding to the "true faith." Those who will reject the Nicene Creed will be deemed heretical and subject to discipline or even exclusion from the Church. The basic questions to be decided include: Who or what was Jesus and what was his relationship to God? How should the Church be organized? What should be the rules of behavior for its leaders? What is the role of women in the Church? Some will attempt to use this creed to continue their battles and to exclude their enemies from the Church. If they succeed, Constantine may fail to achieve his goal of unity in both empire and Church. He will do everything in his power to assure that agreement is reached, but, given the animosity between the factions, he will need all of the skills which allowed him to become sole Emperor. The debate over theology is informed by reading about the various theological positions of the time using Bart Ehrman's *Lost Christianities* and readings from a range of non-canonical Christian texts including the Gospel of Thomas.

*About the Authors:* David E. Henderson is Professor of Chemistry at Trinity College and a founding member of the Environmental Science Program at Trinity. He has a wide range of interests including environmental protection and the history of religion. His research has included studies of acid precipitation and its effects on stream chemistry. He is author of two other Reacting games, *Acid Rain in Europe, 1979-1989* and *Evolution in Kansas, 1999*. Frank Kirkpatrick is Ellsworth Morton Tracy Lecturer and Professor of Religion at Trinity College. He teaches Christian social ethics and philosophical theology, the history of Christian thought, and the philosophy of religion.

***Forest Diplomacy: War, Peace, and Land on the Colonial Frontier, 1756–1757***  
**Nicolas W. Proctor**

Begins with Pennsylvania and the Delaware Indians engaged in a vicious and destructive war. The focus of the game is a peace negotiation, which seeks to end the conflict. At the outset, students familiarize themselves with the historical context, previous treaties, firsthand accounts of the war, controversies over Quaker pacifism, and various Iroquois and Lenâpé cultural texts. Then, students divide into three groups: Interpreters, Pennsylvanians, and Indians. Initially, the latter two groups meet separately, but interpreters may shuttle back and forth. This gives students an opportunity to identify with their assigned cultures. It also allows distrust and suspicion to fester. Students reunite when formal treaty deliberations begin. The structure of these meetings is dictated by the traditional rituals of Indian forest diplomacy, which are intended to create a dispassionate space in the midst of the bloodthirstiness of war. Understanding the attendant cultural conventions becomes an essential element in peacemaking. Ignoring the protocols negates clever compromise on issues like scalping, the liquor trade, settlement, treaty writing, and land ownership. When negotiations conclude, students must still maintain the peace. Negotiating a clever compromise is one thing, but if the treaty remains disagreeable to a significant

number of participants, it collapses amid renewed violence. However, if enough participants can be convinced that the treaty represents a just peace then it will stand. *Forest Diplomacy* includes very few purely “indeterminate” roles; instead every role includes a degree of flexibility. Consequently, participants must interact and pay close attention to one another in an attempt to discover the ground upon which they can compromise. Given the disagreements between and within the factions and the cultural divide between Indians and whites, this will not be easy, but it can be done. As a result of playing this game students better understand the historical dynamics of western expansion as well as the sharp challenge of forging peace across lines of cultural incompatibility and historical antagonism.

*About the Author:* Nicolas W. Proctor is an associate professor of history at Simpson College. He is the author of *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South* (University of Virginia Press).

### ***Greenwich Village, 1913: Suffrage, Labor, and the New Woman***

#### **Mary Jane Treacy**

Takes students to the beginning of the modern era when urbanization, industrialization, and massive waves of immigration were transforming the U.S. way of life. As the game begins, suffragists are taking to the streets demanding a constitutional amendment for the vote. What, they ask, is women’s place in society? Are they to remain in the home or take an active role in the government of their communities and their nation? Labor has turned to the strike to demand living wages and better conditions; some are even proposing an industrial democracy where workers take charge of industries. Can corporate capitalism allow an economically just society or must it be overturned? African-Americans, suffering from the worst working conditions, disenfranchisement, and social segregation, debate how to support their community through education and protest, thereby challenging their continuing marginalization in both the South and the North. Members of all these groups converge in Greenwich Village to debate their views with the artists and bohemians who are in the process of remaking themselves into the new men and new women of the twentieth century. Their spirited conversations not only show a deep understanding of nineteenth century thinkers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Karl Marx; they are also informed by such contemporaries as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Addams, W.E.B. DuBois, Emma Goldman, John Dewey, Franz Boas, and Sigmund Freud. The game asks what social changes are most important as well as how one can or should realize these goals.

*About the Author:* Mary Jane Treacy is Professor of Spanish and Women’s Studies at Simmons College where she is also Director of the Honors Program. She has published *Campo abierto: lecturas sociopolíticas de Latinoamérica* as well as studies on narrations of war, violence, and memory in Central and South America. Her current project centers on conquest and memory in colonial Cuba.

### ***Kansas, 1999: Evolution or Creationism***

#### **David E. Henderson**

The Kansas Board of Education has been “captured” by the religious right. They have just removed the teaching of Darwin’s theory of evolution and of modern Big Bang cosmology from the required school curriculum of the state. As a result, Kansas has become the laughingstock of the “blue states.” Scientific societies are working hard to reverse this ruling which they feel threatens the ability of Kansas students to prepare for scientific and technical careers. Centrist Republicans are trying to reclaim control of the GOP. Democrats see this as a wedge issue to help elect Democrats, including Al Gore who is campaigning for President. But many members of the Board defend their decision as one that keeps the teaching “scientism” out of the schools and protects the good Christian children of Kansas from indoctrination in the secular humanism of the liberal left. Shouldn’t parents have some say in what their children learn and be able to protect them from ideologies that undermine the family’s beliefs? At the same time, the religious right has discovered Intelligent Design as a possible way to circumvent the Supreme Court’s decision against teaching creation in the public schools. How does the state decide between the conflicting claims of authority of religion and science? Students begin the game by running

for election to the Board of Education to try to defend the ideology assigned in their roles. They will prepare campaign speeches and debate their opponents. In the end, the voters will elect a new Board of Education and the new board will then revisit the science curriculum in a series of meetings to write the science curriculum and reach a final decision. The debate is informed by selected readings from Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion*. Students also gain a rich understanding of the complexity of evolution reading *Microcosmos* by Margulis and Sagan. The game includes optional labs to help students understand how evidence is used to support scientific theories.

*About the Author:* David E. Henderson is Professor of Chemistry at Trinity College and a founding member of the Environmental Science Program at Trinity. His research has included studies of acid precipitation and its effects on stream chemistry. He is also an expert on liquid chromatography and has published widely in the field. He has a wide range of interests including environmental protection and the history of religion. He is author of two other Reacting games, *Acid Rain in Europe, 1979-1989* and *Constantine and the Council of Nicaea*.

### ***Marlowe and Shakespeare, 1592***

**Eric S. Mallin**

It is October, 1592, in London. Christopher Marlowe, the most accomplished playwright in the city, has written a new play, *The Massacre at Paris*, which his company, the Lord Admiral's Men, is understandably eager to read and rehearse. That's because the usually lucrative theater season has been postponed since June. The bubonic plague has been spied in outlying parishes, and the Privy Council has recently enforced the statute stipulating that the theaters must close when plague deaths in the city reach 30 per week. Theaters have been shut from the end of June to the beginning of Michaelmas term (September 29); the actors and theater employees are anxious about their finances, and they had better come up with a good play to perform. The acting companies are nervous about the upcoming season; repertory rehearsals have not gone well, as several actors fled the diseased city to tour the provinces, but spent most of their time drinking; they are out of practice, have forgotten their parts, and are only now returning to London. Philip Henslowe, the manager of the Rose Theatre where the Admiral's Men always perform, would ordinarily be happy to debut Marlowe's new script, but the subject—the St. Bartholomew Day's Massacre—is neither pleasant nor neutral, and the play's strongly anti-Catholic stance might inflame hostilities against suspected Catholics and recusant sympathizers, such as some foreign merchants on whom so much of London's trade depends. Should he simply return to the most popular play from last year—Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*? Perhaps. But rumors of Marlowe's atheism have begun to make waves among those same London city authorities. A relatively new but accomplished company, the Lord Strange's Men, boasts a young, somewhat successful writer named William Shakespeare, who is said to have several barnburners in the queue. Strange's Men are a good group, and have performed many times, and well, at the Rose before. While Henslowe waffles, the Queen's Privy Council has agreed to oversee a competition between Lord Strange's Men and the Lord Admiral's Men to decide which theater troupe ought to reopen the playhouses. Which troupe is better? Who will most effectively represent the nation's ideals and energies, humor and grandeur? By the end of the game, one troupe will gain supremacy, for primarily literary, but also cultural, religious, and political reasons.

*About the Author:* Eric S. Mallin is Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin. A specialist in Shakespeare and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English drama, his theoretical interests include new historicism and queer theory. He is also interested in Shakespearean/early modern themes as they transmogrify and metastasize in contemporary cinema.

### ***The Second Crusade: The War Council of Acre, 1148***

**Helen Gaudette and Rebecca Granato**

Brings to life a dramatic moment in the history of the crusades. Students become the great gathering of monarchs, barons, religious authorities, and others that met as a war council in Acre on the

eve of the Second Crusade, and react as participants in the discussions and debates that might have been held there. As William of Tyre, the most important historian of the twelfth-century crusader states explains, after the armies led by the French and German monarchs had arrived in the holy land in response to the Pope's call for crusade, "a general court was proclaimed at the city of Acre to consider the results of this great pilgrimage, the completion of such great labors, and also the enlargement of the realm. On the appointed day they assembled in Acre, as had been arranged. Then, together with the nobles of the realm who possessed an accurate knowledge of affairs and places, they entered into a careful consideration as to what plan was most expedient." The war council must discuss and debate the idea of "crusading," the justifications for holy war, and the reasons why a second crusade should be launched at this time. They must decide who from among the council's participants should lead the crusade, and further if the authority for the crusade should lie in secular or religious hands. And finally, they must consider what city or area should be attacked and how. The debates are informed by Christian and Muslim teachings about peace and holy war found in the New Testament and the *Qur'an*. They are also informed by St. Augustine's *City of God*, documents from the Investiture Controversy, and selections from various other historical sources about the Second Crusade and the crusader states, including William of Tyre, Odo of Deuill, Otto of Freising, Usamah ibn Munqidh, and Ibn al-Qalanisi. The Second Crusade game reverberates with issues that are as important today as they were in the twelfth century.

*About the Authors:* Helen Gaudette, PhD is an adjunct assistant professor of medieval and early modern European history and the director of College Preparatory Programs at Queens College, CUNY. She teaches a wide range of courses with "Reacting," including Study Abroad programs for Queens College. Her interest in aspects of medieval and early modern queenship, patronage, the Crusades, and the Mediterranean world led to the completion of her dissertation on the patronage of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem in 2005. She looks forward to the publication of two new articles, "The Spending Power of a Medieval Queen: Melisende of Jerusalem," in *Women and Money in Medieval Europe*, Theresa Ehrenfight and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. for Palgrave MacMillan and "Queen Melisende as Cultural Mediator in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *Crusades: Medieval Worlds in Conflict*, Thomas F. Madden, James Naus, and Vincent Ryan, eds.

### ***The Struggle for Civil Rights: Birmingham to Memphis, 1963–1966*** **James Highland and Harold McDougall**

Plunges students into two of the many important moments of creative tension in the civil rights movement, in which key debates and decisions about the goals and means were being addressed. The first is based on the Dorchester Retreat (Dorchester, Georgia; 1963) and the second is based on the Meredith March (Mississippi; 1966). Taking on roles in Civil Rights organizations including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), students discuss and debate the worth and cost of nonviolent action, in the context of previous and upcoming protests. They contend with the question of whether nonviolent protest is one means to achieving civil rights, or the only means: In what circumstance can violence be allowed, if at all? To what extent should nonviolent protest parallel the NAACP's legal challenges to Jim Crow laws? Should labor unions and European-Americans be involved with the effort? Which forms of nonviolent action should organizations of limited means pursue: sit-ins, voter registration drives, boycotts, freedom rides, marches? They also consider whether civil rights is the only goal of nonviolent protest, or whether it can and should be applied to other issues that society was facing at the time, such as poverty in America and the Vietnam War. Key texts include the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, Franz Fanon, and Malcolm X.

*About the Authors:* James Highland teaches in the Department of Philosophy at Northern Michigan University. His teaching and research interests include Ancient Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy, Comparative Philosophy, Aesthetics, Ethics and Islamic Philosophy, especially the religious and philosophical foundations of nonviolent action in the work of figures such as Thoreau, Tolstoy, Gandhi, Khan, King, and Hanh. Harold McDougall is Professor of Law at Howard University. His legal

interests include the areas of urban social and economic development, civil rights, and the workings of state, local, and federal government. He was also a civil rights organizer and voter registration worker in his early years and served the NAACP from 1994 to 1997.

***The Trial of Antonio Gramsci***  
**Brigitte H. Schulz**

Takes students into the turbulence of Italian politics during the 1920s. In October 1926, the fascist government of Benito Mussolini banned all political parties “for the defense of the state.” Antonio Gramsci, founding member of the Italian Communist Party, has been arrested on charges of treason. Gramsci has made no secret of his disdain for Western democracy and even lived in the Soviet Union for a year. He has openly called for revolution as the only effective antidote to the fascist menace. At the trial some students represent the fascist government as judge and prosecuting attorneys. Others, mainly representing the liberal party, challenge the government’s insistence that national security takes precedence over civil liberties. Catholics are torn between their religious loyalties and their dismay over the Vatican’s support of Mussolini’s government. Socialists and communists attempt to overcome their internecine struggles in an effort to build an effective alliance against the fascist regime. Some of the issues facing the court include: Does Gramsci have the right to free speech? Should he enjoy additional protection as a freely elected member of parliament? Does he deserve the support of Liberals and Catholics as a fellow parliamentarian? Does the Vatican have the right to intervene because it does not like atheist communists? In fact, what role should religion play in modern secular politics? Is it the responsibility of the Italian people to protect parliamentary democracy in defiance of the present government’s policies? Is it unpatriotic to go against one’s own government? Central texts include works on liberal democracy (Locke, Mill, Paine), Socialism/Communism (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci), and Fascism (Nietsche, Mussolini, Palmieri).

*About the Author:* Brigitte H. Schulz is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Trinity College where she teaches courses on communism/postcommunism and political development from a comparativist perspective. Her publications include two books and numerous articles translated into seven world languages. She is currently working on a book entitled *Democracy and Violence*. The Gramsci game was developed for a course presently taught by the author at Trinity’s Rome campus entitled “Transitions to Democracy: Communism and Fascism in Historical Perspective.

### **C. Games in Early Stages of Development (Fall 2009 Call for Proposals)**

The following projects were selected as “Games in Development” in the Fall 2009 Call for Proposals by the Reacting Advisory Board. Among them, seven received \$2,000 grants to help support materials development and testing.

#### ***Acid Rain and the European Environment, 1979-89: The science, economics, politics, and philosophy of environmental protection***

**David E. Henderson and Susan K. Henderson**

In *Acid Rain in Europe*, students represent the European nations at a series of major international conferences, beginning in Geneva in 1979 and ending in Helsinki in 1989. The goal of these conferences, held under the auspices of the United Nations, is to negotiate the first major international treaty to address long range transport air pollution. If successful, these negotiations will provide a model for dealing with other international environmental issues such as ozone depleting chemicals and Global Warming. In 1972, the UN adopted a statement that held nations responsible for the effects of pollution that travels outside their borders, but, prior to 1979, no treaty has been negotiated to implement this statement of principle. The long range transport air pollution treaty is negotiated against the background of the formation of the European Union and the beginning of Détente between the Soviet client countries and the West. These changes and the political events in the individual countries provide changing pressures on the negotiators during the course of the ten year span of the game.

The time frame of the game provides a rich context for these discussions in which both the scientific and ethical understanding of the environment are evolving but on a solid footing. Research on the impact of acid precipitation in the environment was at its peak, yielding a large body of primary and secondary literature, much of which is accessible to non-science majors. Similarly, the debate over whether environmentalism is simply a utilitarian reaction to the damage done or is an example of deeper inherent rights of nature as a whole is in full swing. Finally, the debate juxtaposes market economics as a tool for environmentalism against command and control approaches common in Europe during this period.

*About the Designers:* David E. Henderson is Professor of Chemistry at Trinity College and a founding member of the Environmental Science Program at Trinity. His research has included studies of acid precipitation and its effects on stream chemistry. He is also an expert on liquid chromatography and has published widely in the field. He has a wide range of interests including environmental protection and the history of religion. He is author of two other Reacting games, *Evolution in Kansas* and *Constantine and the Council of Nicaea*. Susan K. Henderson is Professor of Chemistry at Quinnipiac University. She has published research on food and environmental chemistry. She also has a wide range of interests including human health, nutrition, and yoga.

#### ***America’s Founding: The Constitutional Convention***

**J. Patrick Coby**

*America’s Founding* is a game about what surely is the most important legal event in American history—the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Students gather as members of state delegations sent to Philadelphia to amend the Articles of Confederation or to replace it with something better. Familiar elements, such as the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and the Great Compromise, structure the first half of the game. Here the principal theoretical divide is between large-republic advocates, called nationalists, and small-republic advocates, called confederalists. In order to give prominence to these competing visions of republican government, the game deviates from the historical original in one significant respect: it incorporates, in concert with the Convention’s examination of the New Jersey Plan, arguments articulated in the state ratification debates and in Federalist and Antifederalist writings.

In the second half of the game, the Convention responds to reports written by committees attempting to resolve delayed matters and to put the constitution in its finished form. How to elect the president, what to do about slavery, and whether to include a bill of rights are just a few of the issues that come up at this time. The game ends in a vote to accept or reject the constitution.

The constitution drafted by students need not replicate the one produced in Philadelphia; however, freedom of action is constrained by the fact many of the same structural problems and historical contingencies are in place. Thus students will find improving upon the Electoral College, for example, to be not that easy.

*About the Designer:* J. Patrick Coby is professor of Government at Smith College where he teaches courses in political theory. He is author of *Socrates and the Sophistic Enlightenment: A Commentary on Plato's Protagoras*, *Machiavelli's Romans: Liberty and Greatness in the Discourses on Livy*; *Henry VIII and the Reformation Parliament* ("Reacting to the Past"); *Thomas Cromwell: Machiavellian Statecraft and the English Reformation*; and of over eighty articles and reviews.

### ***Defining the Mind: The APA in the 1970s*** **Peter Bradley**

This game reenacts the intellectual collision between three theories of the mind as exemplified by the debate over whether homosexuality should be declassified as a mental disorder in the early 1970s and the ensuing debates surrounding the definition of "mental disorder" that followed. Game play includes revising the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual to revision III and the creation of the first definition of "mental disorder." Students will advocate psychoanalytical theories, which explain behavior in terms of conflicts between putative mental entities; behaviorist theories, which explain behavior in terms of external stimuli and reinforcement; and cognitive theories, which explain behavior in terms of an underlying information processing system.

Background events that inform the discussions include the rise of psychopharmacology, the Kinsey study, the split between Anthropology and Psychology, and the Behaviorist philosophy of science-based critiques of Wundt's introspective protocol and Gestalt Psychology.

*About the Designer:* Peter Bradley is Assistant Professor of Philosophy, where he specializes in Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Cognitive Science. His research focuses on the interface between psychology, physics, and philosophy in the study of color and color vision. In recent years, his research interests have led to a study of the early era of American Psychology, focusing on the work of Christine Ladd-Franklin, David Katz, and the Gestalts.

### ***Kentucky, 1861: A Nation in the Balance*** **Nicolas W. Proctor and Margaret Storey**

As one of the northernmost slaveholding states, Kentucky plays a pivotal role in the crisis unleashed by Lincoln's election in 1860. Student roles include political leaders, newspaper editors, and militia leaders. Opening with a special session of the legislature, *Kentucky, 1861: A Nation in the Balance* forces students to struggle with the complex and divided loyalties of their roles. They must determine how to reconcile varied motivations, interests, and ideologies with an unprecedented and intensely combustible situation. Informed by assorted speeches, debates, and political tracts, students debate the cultural, economic, and political concepts driving secession while reacting to a constantly shifting political and military situation. Through the use of rhetoric, the press, and paramilitary action, they struggle to alter the fate of the nation.

*About the Designers:* Nicolas W. Proctor teaches history and administers the first-year program at Simpson College. He is author of *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*, and is currently working on several projects for the Reacting to the Past series.

***King or Commonwealth? The English Civil War, 1647–1652***  
**Scott Breuninger**

It is the fall of 1647 and England is in chaos. Parliament's New Model Army has routed King Charles I's forces on the field of battle, but stability proves to be extremely fragile. In response to the Puritan Parliamentarians' decision to disband the Army without pay, the disgruntled soldiers have arranged to meet at Putney to debate the nature of political representation and challenge the authority of both King and Parliament. Charles is in custody at Hampton Court, but the growing tension between Parliament and the Army, coupled with an army of Scots to the north, does not bode well for peace.

Furthermore, a wave of political tracts has flooded the nation, advocating everything from Hobbesian absolutism to universal democracy, and roused the people to unprecedented involvement in the affairs of government. This enthusiasm for politics is coupled with millenarian expectations, as the horrors of the war bring about the spectre of the apocalypse.

Students are thrust into this historical context, assuming roles in the Parliament corresponding to the main factions of the time: Royalist supporters of Charles I defending the traditional notion of the divine right of kings, Puritan Parliamentarians seeking to construct a "godly" state and limit the King's authority, and members of the Army whose egalitarian experiences and control of military authority provide a stark challenge to traditional English political bodies. Drawing upon a wide variety of political and religious texts (especially works such as Filmer, Hobbes, and the Levellers), students will attempt to build a stable government upon the rubble of the Civil War.

*About the Designer:* Scott Breuninger received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where his research focused on European Intellectual History. His current project "recovers" the Irish dimension of George Berkeley's work through a contextual examination of his social and economic writings. He has incorporated a variety of "Reacting to the Past" games within his courses on British and Irish history.

***Living History in 1894 Korea: The Kabo Reforms***  
**John Duncan and Jennifer Jung-Kim**

*Living History in 1894 Korea: The Kabo Reforms* situates students in the great debates over reform that swept East Asia following the irruption of Western imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century. The game is set in the Deliberative Council, a body established by the Korean court in the midst of the Sino-Japanese War to discuss and implement measures to restructure government, economy, society, and education. Members of the Deliberative Council represented a wide range of opinions. Those pushing for radical reforms included men who had studied in Japan under Fukuzawa Yukichi and men who had studied at schools in the United States. There was also a significant conservative Confucian group of the Eastern Way, Western Machines persuasion who, following the example of Qing China, sought to strengthen the traditional order by selectively adopting Western technology. The Council was presided over by the erstwhile isolationist, the Taewŏn'gun, who was also the father of King Kojong. The Council's deliberations took place amid palace intrigue and foreign pressures. Students will have to consult a wide range of writings from Korea, including Yu Kilchun's *Observations from a Journey to the West*, as well as key documents by Japanese and Chinese thinkers, in constructing their arguments for and against reform.

*About the Designers:* John Duncan is professor of Korean history at UCLA and has published widely on Korean history and Confucianism. Some of his publications include *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty* and such co-edited volumes as *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam* and *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire*. Jennifer Jung-Kim has a Ph.D. in modern Korean cultural history from UCLA, has published a number of articles on the construction of gender roles in colonial Korea, has taught at Smith, Occidental, and UCLA and is now Senior Editor and Assistant Director of the Center for Buddhist Studies at UCLA.

***London, 1688: Revolution, Coup, or Royal Renegotiation***  
**Margaret Sankey**

The king is *gone*, long live *who*? Acting as members of the 1688-1689 Convention Parliament, students will use Locke, Hobbes, contemporary pamphlets and memoirs to determine the future of monarchy in the British Isles. Can the constitution abide the removal of a king? Can parliament make conditions on a monarch and control the purse strings of the nation? This game examines all the facets of 1688 historiography, from theories that the revolution was motivated by religion, driven by economic pressure, linked to a larger European move to absolutism and part of longer tradition of limiting royal power reaching back to the Civil War and forward to the American Bill of Rights. In grappling with these issues, participants will dismantle the inevitability of William and Mary's succession to the throne and achieve a better understanding of 17th century religion and political theory.

*About the Designer:* Margaret Sankey is Associate Professor of History at Minnesota State University Moorhead. She holds a Ph.D in European History from Auburn University (2002). Her research was published as *Jacobite Prisoners of the 1715 Rebellion: Preventing and Punishing Insurrection in Early Hanoverian Britain* and in the *Past and Present* article with Szechi, "Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism".

***Modernism vs. Traditionalism: Art in Paris, 1888-89***  
**Gretchen McKay, Nicolas W. Proctor, and Michael A. Marlais**

This game considers the question: What is Art? Students will debate principles of artistic design in the context of the revolutionary changes that began shaking the French art world in 1888-89. Images from the 1888 Salon and the tumultuous year that followed provide some of the "texts" that form the intellectual heart of every Reacting game. Students must read these images and use them as the basis of their positions. In addition to these visual texts, students will read art criticism from the period, which will help to form the basis of their own presentations in favor of one art style over another. These discussions are complicated and enriched by secondary debates over the economics of art, the rise of independent art dealers, and the government's role as a patron of the arts. An additional feature of this game will include an optional "art lab," which teaches students about the issues that French artists faced in the late nineteenth century through a studio-based, hands-on project.

*About the Designers:* Gretchen K. McKay is trained as an art historian as well as an artist, with significant training and experience in oil painting. She has been active in the art history field, with her most recent publication focusing on the nineteenth-century reception of medieval art. She teaches art history at McDaniel College. Nicolas W. Proctor is an historian and an experienced Reacting instructor and game designer. His *Forest Diplomacy Game* has been in the Reacting pipeline for some time and he is also involved in the development of games by other authors. He teaches history at Simpson College. Michael A. Marlais is a well-known art historian specializing in nineteenth-century French art, with several books to his name on the topic. He also concentrates on French art criticism, especially at the end of the nineteenth century, which will be a critical part of the Art Game's structure. Michael teaches art history at Colby College and continues to research aspects of French art in the nineteenth century.

***Petrograd, 1917***  
**David I. Burrow**

"Petrograd 1917" plunges students into the aftermath of the collapse of the Imperial Russian government in February 1917 during World War One. Students represent different factions striving to shape Russia's future government in the wake of Imperial collapse. As the game opens, Russian liberals and moderate socialists hold power in the Provisional Government, recognized by Russia's WWI allies; but the quarrelsome revolutionaries [Bolsheviks (communists), Mensheviks (communists) and Socialist Revolutionaries (agrarian socialists)] in the Petrograd Soviet control workers' organizations and the

support of the common people, including many of Russia's soldiers. Students will confront both political and practical problems as they decide the fate of the empire: what form of government should the future Russian state have? How can social justice be ensured for the majority of Russia's population? How will the students placate the Allies' demands for Russia to recommence an aggressive war effort, while acquiring bread and restoring stability to the lives of Russia's hungry and exhausted peoples? Finally, how will the calls for revolutionary overthrow be heard? Will the revolutionaries be crushed? Will the moderate revolutionaries prevail in their wait for the proper conditions and for the mass of peasants and workers to rise on their own? Or will history repeat itself and the Bolsheviks seize power?

*About the Designer:* David I. Burrow is assistant professor of history at the University of South Dakota, teaching courses in modern European history. He earned his MA and PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and specializes in the history of nineteenth-century Imperial Russia. He incorporates Reacting games into his course for USD's Honors program, Honors 111, "Ideas in History."

### ***Rage Against the Machine: Technology, Rebellion, and the Industrial Revolution*** **Megan Squire**

*Rage Against the Machine* is set in the midst of the period of wage crisis, class conflict, and rapid technological change in Manchester, England during the early years of the Industrial Revolution. The players are drawn from all classes of society, from lords to laborers and everything in between. This game provides a platform for deep discussion of the complexities of the Industrial Revolution by engaging the students in serious reading of key historical texts (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Robert Owen) and prompting subsequent debates about industrialization, unemployment, labor exploitation and the impact of technology on traditional manufacturing.

*About the Designer:* Megan Squire is an associate professor of Computer Science at Elon University. Her primary research focus is on open source systems, "hacking capitalism", and a commons-based peer production of software. This interest has spawned the development of a General Studies seminar in Technology and Society, which allows student exploration of the impact of technology on societies, specifically through role playing the Trial of Galileo in 1616 and the Industrial Revolution in Manchester 1817. Megan has a PhD in computer science from Nova Southeastern University.

### ***Red Clay 1835: Cherokee Removal*** **Jace Weaver and Laura Adams Weaver**

*Red Clay 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty* focuses on American Indian removal from the American Southeast in the 1830s and events leading up to the Trail of Tears. In particular it focuses on a pivotal historical conference held in Red Clay, Tennessee in October 1835 at which the United States presented terms for a removal treaty a few months before the illegal Treaty of New Echota was signed. It deals not only with this too-little-known part of American history, but it also opens up other issues of the period (many of which have continuing relevance today), including westward expansion, race and the status of Native Americans within the framework of the United States, cultural change and assimilation of minorities, how one deals with social problems, and the sectional divide that eventual leads to the American Civil War.

*About the Designers:* Jace Weaver is Franklin Professor of Religion and Native American Studies and the Director of the Institute of Native American Studies at the University of Georgia. He has published 10 books in the field and was the advisor in the "Trail of Tears" episode of "We Shall Remain" series of *American Experience* on PBS. Laura Adams Weaver is a lecturer in English and Native American Studies at the University of Georgia. She is the author of numerous articles on Native American history, literature, and culture.

***The Josianic Reform: Deuteronomy, Prophecy, and Israelite Religion***  
**Adam Porter and David Tab Stewart**

The Josiah Game, set just before a monotheistic reform of Israelite religion (622 BCE), takes up several tensions within the Bible: “the one versus the many gods,” the nature of sacred text and prophecy, and the conflict of ideas within the Bible itself. The central conceit is that the action takes place at the moment of 2 Kings 23:1-3a when all the elders and people of Judah assemble to hear a newly discovered “Scroll of the Teaching” read out to them. The de Wette hypothesis proposes that Deuteronomy is the very text found. The game makes this moment the center of gravity around which discussion of the Hebrew Bible and the practice of Israelite religion revolve. The disintegrating power of the Assyrian Empire supplies an international context for the nation to imagine recovering lost territory if it pleases God by reforming. You are a woman, the prophet Huldah, who vets the scroll: How will you defend it? You are of the royal house: Should you ally with Egypt? You are a Traditionalist: Won’t these changes “remove the ancient landmarks?” The Documentary hypothesis—the literary-historical notion that the Torah grew out of a set of traditions, documentary “sources,” and editorial activity—takes seriously the competing idea sets within the Bible. Why does the found-scroll differ in tone and ideas from the Priestly and Yahwistic traditions? The game’s factions “embody” these idea sets and play out their tensions.

*About the Designers:* Adam L. Porter is an associate professor of Religion and Philosophy at Illinois College. His research specialty is Second Temple Judaism (Judaism from ca. 550 BCE to 70 CE) and has taught a wide range of courses in Bible, as well as Abrahamic religions, Ancient Near Eastern Religions, and Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Mediterranean. He is interested in new pedagogical methods and is author of *Introducing the Bible: An Active Learning Approach* (Prentice Hall, 2005) and has been experimenting with role-playing games in his classroom for several years. David Tabb Stewart is assistant professor of Ancient Near Eastern Religions in the Department of Religious Studies at California State University, Long Beach (and formerly associate professor of Religion and Philosophy at Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX). His Ph.D. was earned at the University of California, Berkeley in Near Eastern Studies with specialties in Hebrew Bible and Hittitology and particular attention to ancient Near Eastern law and ritual. He is currently working on the book, *Ancient Sexual Laws*. Stewart has taught a wide array of courses in Western Religions, Hebrew Bible, and ancient Near Eastern myth and ritual.

## APPENDIX 2. “REACTING TO THE PAST” CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

Consortium members help sustain the project by hosting regional conferences, supporting “Reacting” initiatives on their campuses, and promoting the design of new games. Member include:

Aquinas College (MI)  
Baldwin-Wallace College (OH)  
Barnard College (NY)\*  
Baruch College, CUNY (NY)  
Bemidji State University (MN)  
Cleveland State University (OH)  
College of Staten Island, CUNY (NY)\*  
Dordt College (IA)  
Drake University (IA)\*  
Eastern Michigan University (MI)  
Elon University (NC)  
Illinois College (IL)  
Kenyon College (OH)  
LaGuardia Community College, CUNY (NY)  
Loras College (IA)\*  
McDaniel College (MD)  
Michigan State University (MI)  
Minnesota State University, Moorhead (MN)  
Newman University (KS)  
Ohio State University (OH)  
Pace University (NY) Queens College, CUNY (NY)\*  
Saint Joseph's University (PA)  
Salisbury University (MD)  
Simmons College (MA)  
Simpson College (IA)  
Smith College (MA)\*  
Southwestern College (KS)  
St. John's University (NY)  
St. Joseph's University (PA)  
Trinity College (CT)\*  
Union College (KY)  
University of Georgia (GA)\*  
University of Hartford (CT)  
University of San Diego (CA)  
University of Tennessee at Martin (TN)  
University of Texas at Austin (TX)\*  
Vanguard University (CA)  
Waldorf College (IA)  
Washington & Jefferson College (PA)\*  
Westchester Community College, SUNY (NY)

\* Members of the Reacting Advisory Board

### APPENDIX 3. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR “REACTING TO THE PAST” AND FACULTY SURVEY

Based on the development of “Reacting to the Past” at Barnard, Mark Carnes made a persuasive argument for the power of liminality in the games to engage students in learning.<sup>38</sup> Now that Reacting games are being taught at over 250 schools, a number of faculty have done their own analysis of the effectiveness of the pedagogy. A summary of their findings confirms the success of Reacting in a variety of institutions and types of classes, and further helps to support the impact found in the most sophisticated evaluation of its effects, the study carried out by psychologist Steven Stroessner with the support of two grants from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education.

#### Reports from Individual Instructors

The reports of Reacting instructors consistently emphasize the same themes. Students generally report an enthusiasm for classes using the games in spite of reporting that the games require more work than do their other courses. Faculty reiterate that students become more engaged in their learning than in more traditionally taught classes. They engage more frequently in discussion and debate; they work more willingly in teams. Reacting helps students to achieve core academic skills such as critical thinking and analysis, rhetoric and the ability to make oral arguments, and Reacting students develop their writing at least on the same level as seminars that are identified as writing-intensive. Moreover, “Reacting to the Past” helps to develop some of the dispositions called for by most college mission statements. They demonstrate higher levels of empathy, of understanding of contingency in human history and thus of the role of individual action and engagement.

Professor Tracy Lightcap of LaGrange College<sup>39</sup> reports that he used the Reacting games on the French Revolution and on India, 1945 in a multidisciplinary first-year seminar with three major outcomes in mind: 1) that the games “would encourage critical and analytical thinking about the readings,” 2) that the debates “would encourage teamwork and presentation skills,” and 3) that students “would develop understanding of other cultures and the ethical dilemmas involved in creating political order.” He indicates that the course evaluations “indicate that all these expectations were largely met.” In response to common questions asked of all first-year seminars, Lightcap found that students gave his section the highest rating available at twice the percentage of students in sections that did not use Reacting. On those questions that demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the Reacting section and the regular seminars, students reported that they were more likely to be encouraged to think critically, that they worked more with other students in projects outside of class, that they analyzed real world problems, included diverse perspectives in class, and applied theories and concepts to practical problems. When asked “Were you actively involved in the learning process through hands-on activities?”, 76.5% of the Reacting students responded “Very Much” versus only 15.6% of students in more traditional sections. Perhaps most impressively to Lightcap, when students turned to a discussion of the Iraq war in a section of the course that came after use of the Reacting games, students spontaneously divided into factions,

---

<sup>38</sup> Carnes, “The Liminal Classroom.” See also, Mark C. Carnes, “Inciting Speech” *Change* (March/April 2005): 6-11.

<sup>39</sup> Tracy Lightcap, “Creating Political Order: Maintaining Student Engagement through *Reacting to the Past*,” *PS* (January 2009): 175-179.

created roles, and developed some basic rules to turn that section of the course into a shorter game. As he abandoned his original lesson plan to allow the students more control of the class sessions, Lightcap indicated that “I have seldom been so gratified in the classroom.”

Professor Mark Higbee has reported similar student engagement in using Reacting and Reacting-like games in history courses at Eastern Michigan University.<sup>40</sup> His experience “strongly suggests that RTTP [“Reacting to the Past”] pedagogy can successfully enhance student learning among the diverse student population” of a regional state university. Moreover, he found that the pedagogy encourages students to make social connections—to get to know each other—in ways that often do not happen in large universities but which contribute to “retention and student success.” Like many faculty, Higbee decided to try Reacting as a way to deal with student disengagement in the classroom. He used Reacting games that are in development, such as *Greenwich Village, 1913*, as well as his own civil rights game. Constructing a survey to measure his students’ engagement he found that 63% reported contributing to class discussions more than three times and that students reported a high degree of preparedness as well as more engagement with the professor. 82% reported that they had learned “more through the games.” Perhaps most striking to Higbee is the way his students carried on the learning outside of class: “most of them voluntarily and enthusiastically participated in intellectual discussions outside of class: 88% of my Winter 2008 students reported staying after class to converse intellectually with their peers.” Higbee finds Reacting giving students vital intellectual learning experiences through interaction with their peers. 73% of his students believed they learned more through using the games, and the same number reported that they did more work on the games than they would in a traditional class. 83% of 158 students reported that they would “recommend friends take classes with Reacting games.” Higbee concluded that the data from Eastern Michigan students, when combined with the assessment of Reacting at other institutions, “make a compelling case. . . . Reacting offers a strategy that could reduce student isolation, create strong learning communities, enhance learning, and improve retention.”

John Burney, who was Vice President for Academic Affairs at Loras College when the decision was made to incorporate the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy as part of a required general education course for all students, and then subsequently introduced Reacting as part of the First Year Seminar options at Drake University, found similar levels of satisfaction expressed in student evaluations of four Reacting sections.<sup>41</sup> While 62% of students said that a Reacting course was harder work than other first year classes; 87% indicated that it was valuable as a learning experience and the same percentage, 87%, found it valuable as a social experience, leading students to get to know each other through group work. Burney would agree with Higbee’s conclusion that through Reacting “intellectual work was made pleasurable and sociable” for the vast majority of students. Higbee’s and Burney’s student evaluations confirm what Carnes initially discovered in his own classrooms, that through liminality, when students are freed “from their constraints of their own sense of self, they find it easier both to explore new and challenging ideas and to talk about them.”<sup>42</sup>

Since the incorporation of the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy into sophomore-level course entitled “Democracy and Global Diversity,” all Loras students have taken at least one Reacting course. The course has both very specific mission-driven content outcomes regarding the study of democratic development and social order at two critical times in history, as well as skill outcomes related to critical thinking and writing. Loras faculty regularly assess the course using both content and writing rubrics and

---

<sup>40</sup> Mark D. Higbee, “How Reacting to the Past Games ‘Made Me Want to Come to Class and Learn’: An Assessment of the Reacting Pedagogy at EMU, 2007-2008,” in *Making Learning Visible: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at EMU*, ed. by Jeffrey L. Bernstein (Ypsilanti, MI, 2008), 41-74.

<sup>41</sup> John M. Burney, “*Reacting to the Past*, Using Role-Playing Pedagogy to Engage First Year Students,” presentation/workshop conducted with Dr. Kristen Anderson-Bricker at the 24th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, February 2005. Loras is a private, Catholic, liberal arts college with 1700 students; Drake is a private masters-level institution with 3400 undergraduates.

<sup>42</sup> Carnes, “Inciting Speech.”

student focus groups. In their most recent assessment report<sup>43</sup> 79% of the students demonstrated proficiency in evidentiary and conceptual thinking, and an increase in their abilities to write persuasively over the level they demonstrated as first-year student, but also a higher level than other upper division general education courses. The report indicates “it is clear that students are demonstrating their ability to use evidence and explain rather difficult conceptual material.” The Reacting course is just one in a sequence of general education courses and thus all gains in learning can not be attributed to this pedagogy alone. Individual students also voiced occasional frustration with the mechanics of a particular game or the depth of engagement of a few of the students. Yet overall, the students voiced support for the aims and methods of the course so that the college’s overall conclusion reads: “the course is successful in having students actively learn and engage democracy (in all its variants, strengths, and weaknesses) in concrete historical and cultural contexts. The students generally showed a depth of consideration and an appreciation for how this unique course offering may serve them and their education in important ways.”

Success in engaging students in learning has been reported by several other faculty in analyzing classes at their own institutions.

An unpublished study at Washington & Jefferson College<sup>44</sup> found in its first year (using the *Confucianism* and *India, 1945* games) that students across the board worked harder and found Reacting courses to “be more helpful in gaining liberal arts skills” than students in traditional first year sections. Reacting students generally liked the course more and would recommend it. The second year of evaluation (using the *Darwin* and *Athens in 403 B.C.* games) was more ambiguous. Dividing their students into Best, Mid, and Worst, they found that the Worst, who became more engaged than in other classes, and the Best, who felt more challenged than in other classes, actually did better in Reacting sections compared to traditional seminars. The Mid level of students, while being more likely to report positive results on integrating course materials in reacting sections, did better in several aspects of writing in the traditional sections. Overall, however, the Washington & Jefferson studies find the Reacting experiment to have been a success, indicating that the Reacting sections received high evaluations from students, and “Faculty reported an increase in student learning and engagement following midterm—as compared to a slight decline in Traditional sections.”

In reviewing Mark Carnes and Gary Kates, *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791* for *H-France*, Jennifer Popiel of St. Louis University asserted that her students came to understand how ideology influences practical decisions and to value the role of intellectual debate in a democracy. “In a substantial way, they learn not to erase social and intellectual tensions, but how to use those tensions to clarify their own suppositions and world views.” She grants that in using the game in a disciplinary course on the French Revolution students may develop some small misunderstandings about the details of how things happened, but states that “they seemed to have a much greater understanding of why they happened, and, more importantly, why we still care so much today.”<sup>45</sup> Popiel argues that the game gives students a clearer understanding of the “emotional and ideological content” of the Revolution and in doing so, engaged them in the course more “than they had thought possible.”

Adam Porter of Illinois College turned to the Reacting pedagogy after finding that shorter games that he designed himself only partially achieved his goals of encouraging student engagement and critical thinking to approach scripture, and of fostering collaborative learning. Porter found Reacting games to be more successful because they are longer and more complex, call for more dynamic presentations than normal classroom debates, and ask students to persuade other students who are “indeterminates.”<sup>46</sup> Porter

---

<sup>43</sup> Christopher Budzisz, “Assessing Reacting to the Past at Loras College,” provided to the Reacting Advisory Board in 2009.

<sup>44</sup> “Reports on Freshman Forum Assessment Project” prepared by James M. Sloat and shared with the Reacting Advisory Board by Michael S. Pettersen, July 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Jennifer J. Popiel, review of *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791*, by Mark C. Carnes and Gary Kates, *H-France Review* 5, no. 84 (August 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Adam L. Porter, “Role-Playing and Religion: Using Games to Educate Millennials,” *Teaching Theology and Religion: Using Games to Educate Millennials* 11, no. 4 (2008): 230-235.

seconds Carnes's list of inducements to engagement in the Reacting pedagogy—escaping from oneself, competition, teamwork, student empowerment, vicarious engagement with the past, drama, and liminality. But Porter goes farther to demonstrate that these characteristics of Reacting games correlate with the characteristics often associated with the current generation of college students labeled the “Millennials.” Millennials tend to be “social . . . used to collaborating with their peers on schoolwork,” prefer their work to be “useful” and expect a high degree of feedback from faculty. Moreover, Millennials have grown up in a world of games (77% of college students are “gamers”) and are used to critical thinking, improvisation, and problem solving in order to gain victories. They are familiar with escaping into a different character, being empowered in their new roles with competition, and with collaboration in teams. They in some ways demand complex characters, plots, and drama. “Most classrooms disempower students, even in discussion-based seminars, the instructor remains in charge. *Reacting* changes this, during game play, the students run the classroom.” By learning to voice different viewpoints students develop empathy, they “come to understand those viewpoints more sympathetically.” Porter concludes that Reacting helps students “to read challenging texts, think critically about them and articulate their responses to them cogently in discussion speeches, or writing.” But it goes further to encourage “student leadership, independent thinking, and the recognition that there can be multiple ‘correct’ viewpoints” in powerful ways because it plays into characteristics of learning already present in the Millennial generation.

### **Formal Assessment of the Reacting Pedagogy**

The most sophisticated analysis of student learning in “Reacting to the Past” has been the study directed by Steven Stroessner under the auspices of Barnard College, as part of FIPSE grants to develop and disseminate the Reacting pedagogy.<sup>47</sup> Stroessner's team had an advantage not often found in research on student learning, the ability to measure the impact of the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy against a control group, initially Barnard students who participated in Reacting and non-Reacting sections of the first-year seminar program; and in the second phase, students from Barnard, Smith College, and Trinity College. In a third phase the researchers were able to investigate the unique situation at Loras College where all students are required to take a course that includes Reacting pedagogy in order to determine the characteristics of students who succeed in Reacting classes. Stroessner conducted a series of focus group conversations with students who had taken a Reacting first-year seminar, and used their feedback along with a survey of the literature on research into role playing and simulations to develop research questions and shape the assessment of the impact of the pedagogy both on beliefs and competencies.

Stroessner's comparative research supports the claim that Reacting has a significant positive effect on several attitudes and skills.<sup>48</sup> The research found that students demonstrated

- an elevated level of self-esteem. Reacting students both showed a higher self-esteem compared to students in non-Reacting sections and showed a higher level of self-esteem at the end of the semester compared with their scores at the beginning of the semester.
- an increase in empathy: while students in the control sections showed a decrease in emotional empathy, Reacting students showed an increase.

---

<sup>47</sup> Steven J. Stroessner, Laurie Susser Beckerman, and Alexis Whittaker “All the World's a Stage? Consequences of a Role-Playing Pedagogy on Psychological Factors and Writing and Rhetorical Skill in College Undergraduates,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 101, no. 3 (2009): 605-620. Barnard received an initial FIPSE grant to develop the Reacting games (1998-2001), and then a second grant to disseminate the pedagogy in collaboration with several institutions (2002-2005). Both grants contained funding for an in-depth assessment of the method.

<sup>48</sup> Note that the research found no difference on several scales including Machiavellianism, confidence as a speaker, and Mastery.

- a more external locus of control, i.e., level of belief that outcomes often are determined by forces that are external to self.
- a greater endorsement of the belief that human beings are malleable, contributing to a belief in the possibility of incremental change, that people can change over time and across contexts.
- enhanced verbal rhetorical skills: Reacting students demonstrated a greater ability to make an oral argument.
- The first phase of the research showed no significant effect on student confidence as a Speaker, but the second phase did demonstrate that student confidence in public speaking increased over the semester.
- An equal achievement in extemporaneous writing skills with traditional seminars. Some Reacting students in focus groups had expressed the fear that they were not getting as intensive instruction in writing as students in other seminars (and indeed, since a process of revision is not built into the games, a similar question has been raised by some writing instructors), but although the nature of the writing differed Reacting students developed their writing skills at the same pace as other students.

Looking at the unique population at Loras College, Stroessner was able to conclude that while it is possible to identify characteristics of students who display “enjoyment” of the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy, these characteristics do not predict achievement in the course. He indicated that students with “a high degree of self-confidence, both in general and specifically as a public speaker” tend to like Reacting pedagogy. Students who “do not like receiving attention as a result of disagreement” or who are “highly emotionally empathic” tend to like the pedagogy less. But, “none of the psychosocial variables correlated with the final grade.” While cautioning that instructors need to be aware that some students are more uncomfortable with the pedagogy and may need additional support, all of these students are able to be successful in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the games.

Stroessner concluded that his research findings “suggest that this role-playing pedagogy adds diversity to student experience while producing some beneficial psychological consequences and improvements in academic skills.” Perhaps most importantly, by developing both a greater sense of self-esteem at the same time as a sense that they do not control many of the outcomes in their lives, “students commented that they eventually learned to cope with unexpected changes and some even suggested that they came to enjoy surviving and even thriving in such an environment.” He suggests that this would be a fruitful area for further research.

Of course, there are caveats. Lightcap warns faculty that the games take more class time than most simulations, and indicates that they do not scale well to classes over thirty students. He argues that training for instructors planning to use them is “imperative;” most faculty would agree that the best way to start is to attend a Reacting conference and to play a game with other faculty. Higbee seconds Stroessner’s research and indicates that faculty have to be aware that some students will not like the unpredictable nature of the games. Faculty should be ready to help those students cope with the fact that a reacting course does not have the regular routine of a lecture or traditional seminar course. Niall Slater has raised a larger issue that in helping students gain empathy and develop rhetorical skills, instructors need to be aware that they might also encourage a “broader tendency in undergraduate culture toward relativism.”<sup>49</sup> But the vast majority of faculty who have taught with “Reacting to the Past” believe that the engagement stimulated by the games opens up unique learning opportunities for their students.

### **“Reacting to the Past” Faculty Survey, Spring 2009**

To confirm this analysis, as part of the Teagle grant initiative, the Reacting Advisory Board surveyed 53 faculty who have used “Reacting to the Past” in a variety of institutions. The aim of the

---

<sup>49</sup> Niall W. Slater, “Re-Inventing the Trivium: Debate, Dialogue – and Empathy” *LiberalArtsOnline* 5, no. 5 (May 2005).

survey was to evaluate the success of the pedagogy in achieving the learning outcomes called for by the Association of American Colleges & Universities in the *Liberal Education and America's Promise* initiative.<sup>50</sup> The results are summarized below. They make it clear that faculty find Reacting to be successful in promoting student learning. 94% agree that it is an effective or highly effective pedagogy. Over 90% find Reacting to be successful at producing student learning in Inquiry and Analysis, Oral Communication, and Team work. 100% of faculty agree that Reacting Provided Academic Challenge; and over 90% agreed that it effectively gets students to Engage with Big Questions, Develops students' ability to Apply Learning to Complex Problems, Teaches the Art of Inquiry, and Connects Knowledge with Choices and Actions. "Reacting to the Past", in fact, provides a pedagogy that brings positive achievements in many of the areas advanced as key to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century liberal education.

While acknowledging the fear that some faculty have of losing content in a course, most would advocate that the trade off between content and engagement is worth it in producing deeper student learning. What is also significant is the impact many faculty noted not just on students but on their own teaching. Faculty noted that using "Reacting to the Past:" "was probably the best teaching experience I have ever had"; "transformed my approach to teaching"; and "made teaching fun again." One faculty member noted that "it is a great mid-career rejuvenator." Several spoke of Reacting as curing the passivity of the classroom and providing greater connections between faculty and students. "Reacting has resulted in deep relationships with my students that go far beyond the course. Reacting provides faculty with a natural way to bring together instruction and advising."

The faculty survey results confirm the deeper analysis of student learning and point to the broad impact of "Reacting to the Past" pedagogy. The results indicate that both students and faculty become more deeply engaged in the common enterprise of learning through the use of Reacting to the Past.

### Summary of Survey Responses

Participants: 53 faculty, 2 other.

Institutions: 2- Associate, 24 – Baccalaureate, 20 – Masters, 8 – Doctoral, 1- Other

67% have attended a conference at Barnard College, 38% more than one.

47% have taught three or more individual Reacting games in their courses.

### Overall, what was your level of satisfaction with how well Reacting games produced student learning?

**62% -- Highly effective pedagogy** + **32% -- Effective pedagogy = 94% Positive**  
 vs. 6% -- Fair Pedagogy 0% -- Poor pedagogy

### Curricular areas using Reacting games:

49% -- Major (disciplinary courses) 49% -- General education courses beyond FYS

38% -- First year seminar courses 27% -- Honors courses

18% -- Interdisciplinary programs (Women's Studies, American Studies, etc.)

*Reacting to the Past succeeds in achieving the learning outcomes detailed in the Association of American Colleges & Universities 2007 report on Liberal Education and America's Promise.*

### Instructors find *Reacting to the Past* to be "Very Effective" or "Effective" in producing student learning of content or skills in these areas:

**96.2% Inquiry and Analysis**

**96.1% Critical Thinking**

**96.1% Oral Communication**

**92.4% Integrative Learning**

**90.6% Teamwork**

**88.7% Knowledge of Human Cultures**

---

<sup>50</sup> The survey was conducted by John Burney with the aid of the Drake University Office of Institutional Research.

86.7% Written Communication

86.5% Civic Knowledge/of Democracy

75.5% Ethical Reasoning

**Instructors agreed that Reacting as “Very Effective” or “Effective” in engaging students in learning by providing these authentic experiences:**

**100% Providing Academic Challenge**

**94% Engaging with Big Questions**

**94% Developing Students’ Ability to Apply Learning to Complex Problems**

**92% Teaching the Art of Inquiry**

**90% Connecting Knowledge with Choices and Actions**

85.7% Fostering Civic Learning

82% Fostering Intercultural Understanding

78% Fostering Ethical Learning

77.6% Teaching the Art of Innovation

The instructors identified these as the **biggest obstacles to a wider adoption** of Reacting to the Past on their campuses:

- Difficulty in freeing faculty from the demands of other required courses. (12 cited it as a major problem that blocks further development).
- Resistance by faculty who fear losing “content” in a course. (12 cited it as a major problem that blocks further development).
- Faculty uncertainty about active learning pedagogy.
- Lack of financial support for faculty development of new pedagogies.
- Difficulty in fitting in faculty workload because of demands of scholarship.

**Select general comments:**

- “This was probably the best teaching experience I have ever had, and a number of my students said it was the best class they had ever taken. This is the first time I have had students take their learning outside of the classroom voluntarily, and it created permanent bonds among many of the students who worked together.”
- “Reacting has completely transformed my approach to teaching. I find that it forces me as an instructor to be much more invested in my students. . . . outreach to students and connecting with them personally is a key factor in the success of the game! I have rethought my role as a history teacher: I no longer try to cover ‘everything’ in lectures, but rather I see myself as a coach in helping students navigate through the exciting avalanche of information that is available. Instead of attempting to instill a pre-determined amount of information in the students, I now focus on igniting their desire to learn more and assisting them in finding what they need.”
- “Reacting is the most powerful pedagogy I have seen in 20 years of teaching, in terms of engaging students in learning a variety of ‘big’ ideas and classic texts.”
- “Students love the games. When I’m teaching Reacting, I’m always the favorite . . . because students actually get the chance to think, speak, and advocate in my class. Even the shyest students participate actively—they get caught up in the moments and have passionately defended something before they fully realize they’re speaking in public.”
- “Students report that participating in Reacting fundamentally changes their approach to learning and encourages more of a sense of responsibility.”

**Suggestions for improvement:**

- Developing a format/template/manual for game design for instructors who would like to experiment with developing additional games for their courses.

- Help with briefing faculty on how to assuage fears students might have about the pedagogy.
- Communicate more about the way Reacting games are being used in the sciences.
- Engage librarians as active partners in supporting the games.
- Learning communities that pair a “skills” course with a Reacting course are often successful in achieving dramatic improvements in communication skills.
- Share modifications to the writing assignments that can help introduce some element of revision.
- Create materials tailored to administrators to help communicate the benefits of Reacting and/or to communicate the benefits in courses beyond history.
- Discuss ways to make the Forum more dynamic, with more rapid responses to questions.
- More games: beyond intellectual history, non-U.S., science, games of different lengths.

**A few final words:**

- “For me as an instructor, it’s made teaching fun again. I’ve begun to revise all my courses around either Reacting games or simplified versions. . . . Students regularly tell me that they learn more preparing for the simulations than they would sitting through traditional lectures.”
- “In English 1101, The Argument. . . , Reacting gets students over the hurdle of saying and writing something that their classmates might not agree with. The game is based on disagreement, and on saying or writing things in someone else’s voice. The taciturn speak. The shrinking assert themselves. And the forward find that they are confronted with actual challenge rather than simply an uncontested field.”
- “It is a great mid-career rejuvenator, . . . it makes you see the survey through fresh eyes. But for students, it’s an amazing experience.”
- “My transformation from ‘professor’ to ‘coach’ in Reacting has resulted in deep relationships with my students that go far beyond the course. Reacting provides faculty with a natural way to bring together instruction and advising. It also provides students with a way to become engaged in academic material. I have never seen such a successful pedagogy for a large percentage of my students. . . . In fact, it has been the ONLY pedagogy that has worked for some students. My colleagues who teach higher level courses—excellent teachers—tell of a passivity in discussion with the very students who were jumping out of their seats in my class. It is the pedagogy, it is the time devoted to one game, it is the student-directed classroom that makes it happen.”