

6-1-2010

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Recommended Citation

Farmer, Kevin and Meisel, Steven I. (2010) "Developing the competencies of interactional justice," *Organization Management Journal*: Vol. 7: Iss. 2, Article 10.
Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol7/iss2/10>



Teaching & Learning

Developing the competencies of interactional justice

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Abstract

Grounded in social exchange theory, interpersonal and informational justice (collectively “IJ”) reflect the degree to which people affected by organizational decision makers perceive that they have been treated in a dignified and informative manner. Empirical research shows that IJ is positively correlated with myriad beneficial organizational outcomes (e.g., performance, job satisfaction and trust in authority figures) and negatively correlated with several noxious ones (e.g., withdrawal, negative reaction to decisions). The presence of IJ is an important mitigating factor in accepting negative organizational outcomes. In addition, the negative impact of injustice on an individual’s self-esteem can have profound implications for relationships among organizational stakeholders. The platform for introducing learners to IJ is a skills-based design for identification and use of fair behaviors. The experiential exercise is also designed to facilitate observational skills in seeing the consequences of IJ in organizational life – particularly as its presence or absence affects the communication flow in various interactions between managers and their subordinates.

Organization Management Journal (2010) 7, 155–168. doi:10.1057/omj.2010.19

Keywords: interpersonal justice; informational justice; instrumental speech; value-expressive speech; role play



Organization
Management
Journal

Introduction

Why does justice matter? How we feel about our time at work is a function of our perception of organizational justice. Fairness is often the subject of examination in organizational life because it provides a litmus test of an organization’s loyalty to its members. As the fabric of the psychological contract becomes stretched in an increasingly turbulent economy, fair treatment prevents it from being worn to shreds. Accordingly, the subject of justice should receive greater attention in our classrooms. Although the basic idea of justice is touched on in most texts on Organizational Behavior, the brevity of these references belie its importance to organizational life. As a result, we cannot assume an in-depth understanding of this important topic. Fortunately, discussion of justice can be easily situated in the coverage of leadership, individual/group dynamics, performance appraisal, conflict resolution and negotiation. The following is a discussion of relevant concepts and an associated activity to illuminate these ideas for management learners.

The focus of justice research has progressed from outcomes to procedures and, most recently, to the personal fairness manifested by and among organizational stakeholders. Two constructs, interpersonal and informational justice (collectively "IJ"), have been empirically correlated with several key organizational outcomes that are routinely emphasized in management classes: Positive behaviors such as employees' performance, job satisfaction, evaluation of, and organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward, authority figures and trust as well as less desirable behaviors such as withdrawal and negative reactions (Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005). IJ also relates to communication as a function of language, symbol and non-verbal meaning. Understanding IJ reveals an important lens through which our students can see how organizational behavior concepts are put into practice (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). This material should be of considerable interest to students in their personal as well as their organizational lives and deserves consideration for inclusion in management education curricula.

The following sections provide a brief overview of organizational justice generally and, more particularly, of IJ. A description of the training template upon which the exercise is based is followed by a statement of learning objectives. Then, an experiential exercise is described that presents students with the opportunity to demonstrate fair behavior by an authority figure toward a less powerful subordinate. Suggestions for debriefing the exercise conclude the discussion.

Justice overview

Research on distributive justice focused on rules of distribution of tangible outcomes (i.e., equity, equality and need) with equity theory (Adams, 1965) being the dominant metric for economic social relations (Deutsch, 1985). In the mid-1970s, the research agenda shifted to processes. Thibaut and Walker (1975) discovered that where one lacks control over a decision affecting him or her (e.g., lawsuits, arbitration), the ability to influence an outcome in one's favor leads the individual to perceive the process to be fair and, accordingly, to make it more likely that the outcome will be accepted. Procedural justice explains the conduct of decision makers as well as the structures within which they operate (Colquitt *et al.*, 2005).

Speech lies at the heart of procedural justice. The two models of speech identified in procedural justice research have varying consequences. The

instrumental model (Lind and Tyler, 1988) posits that a process is perceived to be fair when the procedure or authority figure allows people to submit evidence and express arguments in hopes of influencing a favorable outcome (Cobb, Vest and Hills, 1997). The value-expressive model embraces speech for its intrinsic, cathartic effect (Korsgaard and Roberson, 1995). Not surprisingly, the models are intertwined (Shapiro and Brett, 2005).

IJ, the most recent wave of justice research, targets the actions of authority figures. Bies and Moag (1986) formulated four criteria for fair treatment – truthfulness, respect, propriety of questions and justification – that they combined in a construct labeled interactional justice. Interactional justice has been refined into two distinct, albeit related, constructs: interpersonal and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001).

Interpersonal justice focuses on the enactment of decisions by authority figures generally and, more particularly, on whether an individual is treated with dignity and respect (Bies, 2005). In cases of perceived injustice the victim experiences a strong physical sensation that manifests affective as well as cognitive consequences (Bies, 2001). Informational justice is concerned with the quality and extent of the explanation given for a decision as well as with the sincerity with which the information is imparted (Tyler and Bies, 1990). Both constructs are grounded in social exchange theory (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2002) and have been found to have a significant positive correlation with myriad beneficial organizational variables (e.g., evaluation of authority figure, performance and satisfaction) as well as a significant negative correlation with several noxious outcomes such as withdrawal and negative behaviors (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). Figure 1 traces the impact of interpersonal and informational justice on key dependent variables identified in the workplace.

To help instructors position the exercise in their already crowded courses, Table 1 lists the salient chapters from a non-exclusive list of leading organizational behavior textbooks. Part of the appeal of the exercise we propose is its range. It can be used to synthesize topics that might otherwise have been covered distinctly and with an aggregately greater time commitment.

Although interpersonal, informational and procedural justice constructs are distinct (Colquitt, 2001), the relationship between interpersonal and informational justice, on the one hand, and

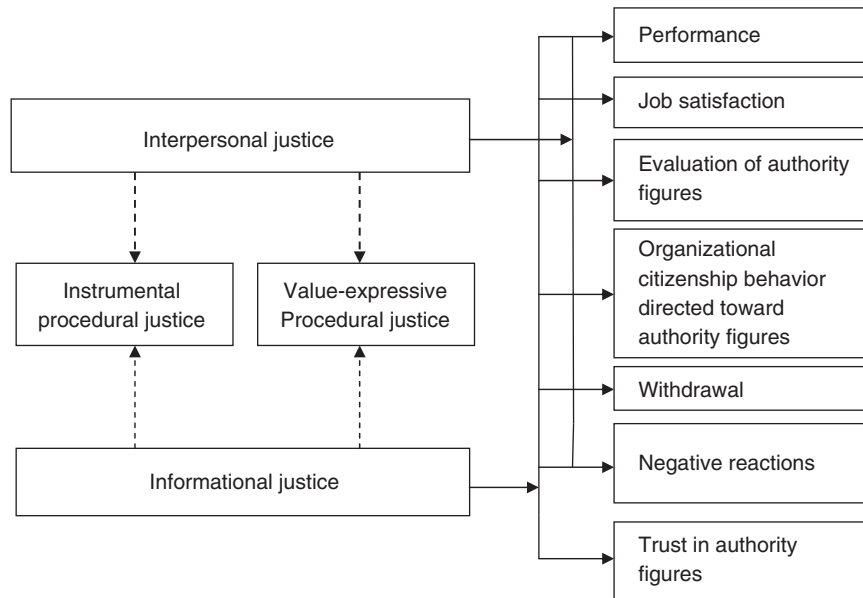


Figure 1 Impact of interpersonal and informational justice.

procedural justice (i.e., instrumental and value-expressive speech), on the other, has yet to be examined. Exploring the connection between these principles is an important contribution of the exercise. A non-exhaustive list of the discussion points that will prompt learners to delve more deeply into IJ and its consequences is contained in Appendix A. Instructors can copy and paste these points into a PowerPoint slide or a classroom handout.

Interpersonal and Informational justice training

Skarlicki and Latham (2005) analyzed the benefits of training managers in organizational justice and articulated a generic template for justice training. Using their template, Greenberg (2006) trained hospital managers in IJ as part of a quasi-experiment that focused on the impact of pay injustice on insomnia reported by nurses. His training sessions consisted of describing the construct, reviewing case studies, directing role-playing exercises and involving participants in carefully guided group discussions. A combination of lectures, group discussions and role plays in organizational training programs has been found to create a higher probability of changing on-the-job behaviors (Burke and Day, 1986). For example, Cole and Latham (1997) developed role-play scenarios involving three players (i.e., supervisor, employee and

appraiser) based on actual arbitration decisions in order to enhance the fairness of a unionized disciplinary system. They taught supervisors to provide a clear rationale for why a subordinate's behavior causes concern, to demonstrate a sincere attempt to help the employee improve, to focus on undesired behaviors rather than the person, to identify alternative replacement behaviors and to speak in a normal volume.

Building on the Skarlicki template, we have developed an exercise for teaching IJ skills to undergraduate and graduate business students as well as executive education learners. Role plays have been found to be particularly effective when individuals play themselves in a familiar situation (Cole and Latham, 1997). Toward that end, we developed a role play from a popular film, *Scout of a Woman* (1992). The situation should be familiar to those who are or have been college students. The use of video in management classrooms has been shown to enhance students' critical thinking in matters of fairness and ethics (Champoux, 2006). The following exercise suggests a method for teaching the elements of effective justice-based communication and offers opportunities for practice. This approach gives both new and experienced learners additional skills to use in resolving workplace conflicts. Finally, the attached forms give observers a clear guide and some metrics to identify IJ and assess its effects on the actions and words of the participants.



Table 1 Non-exclusive list of organizational behavior textbooks and chapters relating to the exercise

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>Chapter number(s) & Title(s)</i>
Aldag & Kuzuhara	1st	4. Solving Problems; 5. Communicating Effectively; and 10. Managing Politics, Conflict, and Change
Andre	1st	7. Communication and Interpersonal Relationships; and 14. Conflicts Good and Bad
Colquitt, LePine & Wesson	1st	6. Trust, Justice, and Ethics
George & Jones	5th	13. Power, Politics, Conflict and Negotiation
Griffin & Moorhead	9th	11. Communication in Organizations; 14. Power, Politics, and Organizational Justice; and 15. Conflict and Negotiation in Organizations
Hellriegel & Slocum	13th	9. Interpersonal Communication in Organizations; and 13. Managing Conflict and Negotiating Effectively
Hitt, Miller & Collela	2nd	9. Communication; and 12. Conflict, Negotiations, Power, and Politics
Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson	8th	8. Managing Misbehavior; 11. Managing Conflicts and Negotiations; 12. Power, Politics and Empowerment; and 13. Communication
Kreitner & Kinicki	9th	13. Managing Conflict & Negotiation; 15. Influence Tactics, Empowerment, and Politics
Luthans	11th	8. Stress and Conflict; and 9. Power and Politics
Mainiero & Tromley	2nd	2. Interpersonal Relations, Communication, and Conflict.
McShane & Von Glinow	5th	9. Communicating in Teams and Organizations; 10. Power and Influence in the Workplace; and 11. Conflict and Negotiation in the Workplace
Nelson & Quick	3rd	7. Communication; 10. Power and Politics; and 12. Conflict and Negotiation
Newstrom		3. Communication; and 11. Interpersonal Behavior
Osland, Kolb, Rubin & Turner	8th	8. Interpersonal Communication; 11. Problem Solving; 13. Conflict & Negotiation; and 18. Power & Influence
Robbins & Judge	13th	11. Communication; and 15. Conflict & Negotiation
Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn	11th	14. Communication; and 15. Conflict and Negotiation
Sweeney & McFarlin	1st	9. Constructively Dealing With Conflict and Stress; and 10. Communicating Successfully

Learning objectives

The learning objectives of the exercise are five-fold. First, the exercise helps to explain the importance of practicing IJ on key organizational outcomes such as commitment, trust, performance and satisfaction. Second, it is designed to teach students to engage in IJ behaviors through the use of role plays that are based on video clips from popular movies, a well-established learning technique. Third, it creates a hands-on experience that allows learners to practice techniques that

will help them navigate tense interactions they may encounter in their workplaces. Fourth, the metric and matrix we suggest enable observers to identify just and unjust behaviors as well as gauge their impact on communication. Last, the importance of personal fairness – in life as well as work – is highlighted in a non-threatening environment that invites participants to express their emotions about the exercise while bringing their own life experiences into the learning process.



Exercise overview

Initiation

This exercise opens with the showing of a short video clip of an academic or workplace interaction to illustrate unjust behaviors – as accentuated by the authority figure's receptivity to the instrumental and/or value-expressive voice of a subordinate. (A list of suggested films along with specific scenes is provided in Appendix B.) Although instructors are welcome to use films that demonstrate just behaviors, in the authors' experience learners, especially traditional undergraduate students, seem more attuned to films that not only show unjust behaviors but particularly those manifested by educators toward students. After discussing the just or unjust behaviors seen on screen, roles are assigned for playing either the authority figure or the recipient of the negative outcome. The exercise is drawn from a scene in the 1992 film, *Scent of a Woman* (scene and role descriptions are specified in Appendix C). In that film, school property has been vandalized and the Dean learns that a needy but courageous student is the sole witness. In the confrontation that follows, the student is faced with the choice of identifying the culprits or losing his scholarship. A third role has been developed for observers to reflect and assess the behaviors of both role players (metric forms are contained in Appendix D). The parties in the conversation and the observers use a feedback form to assess their perceptions of fair behavior. The metric forms also encourage observations on the type of speech stimulated by the justice instructions. This provides a structured assessment of justice based on objective standards of effective behaviors and, we hope, provokes a reflexive, nonjudgmental discussion of fair behavior and voice. Finally, the instructor will check for satisfaction data with the conversation from both deliverer and recipient in each role-play group and the data will be displayed for large group debriefing.

The classroom/training design

The exercise is accessible to students in undergraduate or graduate classes. This design has also been used effectively with executive learners.

Preparation. An introduction to IJ skills takes place in the class preceding the exercise. As stated previously, the insertion of the exercise in class can accompany several traditional organizational behavior topics or can be offered as a stand-alone presentation on justice. The pervasive effects of IJ

on key organizational variables should be stressed. (This section of the exercise satisfies Learning Objective No. 1.) To open the dialogue and serve as an icebreaker for communication, students may also be prompted to share examples of just and unjust behaviors culled from their personal experience. Following the discussion, the class should be organized for the exercise.

Running the exercise

- A. *Reading:* In the exercise, students read a short case of an administrator-student interaction and are organized into three groups: Those who play Deans, those who play students and observers (two per group).
- B. *Timing:* 50–75 min In a 50-min class, the instructor should plan for debriefing to carry over into the next class period. If class time is 75 min or longer, one class period will be sufficient to complete the exercise.
- C. *Equipment:*
 1. a room with movable furniture to accommodate group work;
 2. DVD player and projection system for the introductory film clip; and
 3. white board or easel to display satisfaction results.
- D. *Directions:* The instructor can introduce the role instructions in several ways. The first is to take the Dean players aside and give each a separate IJ task (see case sets below). This is easily done and facilitated by simply handing each person a slip of paper with the instructions. Another possibility for role instructions is to take the Dean assignment and create four different handouts, each with a different justice assignment.
- E. *Rehearsal:* The role players should have time to consider their part of the case and plan for their meeting. The instructor has the option of instructing each player to read and rehearse his or her role individually outside of class or allow students with the same roles to discuss the case and their options among themselves.
- F. *Meeting:* A meeting between Dean and student (with observers silently attending) in which the Dean is asked to respond to the case situation using guidelines for inviting the student's instrumental and/or value-expressive speech. (This section of the exercise satisfies Learning Objective Nos. 2 and 3.) There are four variants of role plays in which the Dean is directed to

use different approaches to the interaction. The student role play nominally remains the same throughout, although a fair amount of variation is expected when students are engaged in the exercise.

- G. *Data-gathering*: After the players complete the role play, observers record their response to the interaction and ask the student for feedback regarding satisfaction with the meeting. These data are reported to the Instructor who posts the outcomes from each group. (This section of the exercise satisfies Learning Objective No. 4.)
- H. *Debriefing*: The instructor can ask questions regarding how each Dean chose to talk to the student (e.g., How each student felt about his or her interaction with the Dean?) while observers assess the use of IJ. The data from each interaction provide additional information regarding outcomes. Players and observers can also be asked about the emotions they felt during the exercise. (This section of the exercise satisfies Learning Objective No. 5.)
- I. *Time line*:

<i>Action</i>	<i>Time estimate (min)</i>
<i>Introduction</i> : Describe IJ and assign roles (i.e., Dean, Student and Observer)	5
<i>Reading</i> : Role players and Observers read the case and plan their interactions	10
<i>Directions</i> : Create case groups: one Dean, one Student and two Observers sitting together (ask Dean and Student to sit facing each other with the Observers sitting slightly outside of the interaction)	5
<i>The Meeting</i> : Ask each Dean to begin the meeting by saying to the student, "Thank you for coming in." (Instructor should keep track of time.)	5
<i>Data-gathering</i> : These data are recorded by the players and observers and are reported to the instructor who posts the outcomes from each group on the matrix (see Appendix D)	10
<i>Debriefing</i> : The data from each interaction provides additional information regarding outcomes	20
<i>Summary</i> : The discussion and associated data provide some evidence-based conclusions about the use of expressive and informational speech to create more just interactions and greater acceptance of decisions from authority figures. The parallels to various work-related activities (e.g., performance appraisals, work instructions and promotion decisions) should be introduced at this point with additional comment from students	20
Total time to complete exercise: 75 min	

Scene variations. To stimulate variety (especially with large classes) by drawing on a wider range of IJ behaviors and the types of speech they provoke, we suggest that groups be assigned different case variations. The suggestions that follow are by no means exhaustive. Indeed, instructors are invited to modify the scenes to capture events occurring on their campuses, localities or happenings reported in the press.

Case One

- A. The Dean makes a demand of the Student and gives the potential negative outcome (i.e., cooperate or risk expulsion) without allowing the Student to use Instrumental or Value-expressive speech.
- B. The Dean states the decision and blocks the Student's attempts to respond (other than allowing him or her to name the culprits). The Dean's decision cannot be changed.

Case Two

- A. With the same scenario, the Dean continues to insist on cooperation but permits the Student to use instrumental speech (e.g., "Tell me what you saw and this conversation will be kept confidential.").
- B. In this case, the decision of the Dean can be changed as the Student is empowered to convince the Dean that he or she did not see the culprits or cannot ethically identify them if he or she did.

Case Three

- A. With the same scenario, the Dean offers no explanation or excuse for negative decision but politely invites the student to use value-expressive speech (e.g., "I know how hard this must be for you and I hope you know how much I appreciate your willingness to help our community be a better place.").
- B. In this case, the decision of the Dean cannot be changed (i.e., still demanding cooperation from the student) but the role allows for an empathetic discussion.

Case Four

- A. The Dean gives a full explanation for the potential negative outcome if the Student does not cooperate and politely invites the student to use either Instrumental speech (e.g., "Is there anything you want me to know about the situation or your decision?") or value-expressive



speech (e.g., “I know how hard this must be for you and I hope you know how much I appreciate your willingness to help our school become a better place.”).

- B. In this case, the decision of the Dean can be changed and the Student is empowered to freely express his or her thoughts and feelings.

Review data and debrief. There are several important points to help debrief this exercise:

- A. The Observers ask the role players to use a scale of 1–5 to rate their satisfaction or lack of satisfaction with the process and outcome of the meeting. Observers are assigned to ask players about their satisfaction in order to add an active, vocal component to their role and, in the process, sensitize them to the feelings players experience over the behaviors observed. In order to capture data in an efficient manner the Instructor queries each group and records their scores on a board in front of the class, using a matrix contained in Appendix E. Some questions useful for eliciting instrumental or value-expressive speech are contained in Appendix F.
- B. The four different cases are explained to the class and the different outcomes are examined. Generally, the satisfaction (1 being low and 5 being high) is expected to be greater with increased use of the Instrumental and value-expressive speech. We expect that Case Four players will report greater satisfaction than those from Cases One, Two and Three. In similar fashion, the Case Two players will report greater satisfaction than those from Case One (where no student voice is permitted).
- C. The Observers should then be asked to report on the events of each meeting with particular attention to the justice scripts used or omitted. The feeling or tone of each meeting should also be part of the report (e.g., “Did it seem friendly, angry, disappointed, etc.?”). Note that learners may have some difficulty in reporting or making sense of the scores players report and may require guidance from the instructor as to what constitutes IJ. Instructors should work with observers for signs of confusion in interpreting the action.
- D. The debriefing should continue by asking the Dean and Student players the following questions:
1. *Students:* How did you feel during your meeting with the Dean? What did the Dean

do that made you feel more or less scared, comfortable, confident or angry?

2. *Deans:* How did you feel during your meeting with the Student? What did you do to increase or decrease a sense of IJ? This review of the “script” developed by each student playing the part of the Dean is critical to meeting Learning Objective No. 3.

The data from each role play group should be examined to see if the reported feelings of satisfaction match the reports from the individual role players. That is, do the numerical ratings support the feelings reports from each group’s Dean and Student role player?

The Observers are then asked to give feedback to both parties regarding use of IJ behaviors. Generally, personal fairness should be greatest for Case Four and lowest for Case One. An interesting follow-up question would be whether the observed interaction was the most effective way for the Dean to get what he or she wanted from the meeting? Some learners might observe that the Dean would be better served by simply intimidating the student into providing the desired answer. This is a reasonable observation and can be a realistic expectation. In addition, it can introduce a teachable moment regarding the overall effectiveness and cost of the use of positional power as a means of influence. The subject can be approached through the use of the following questions:

- A. If the Dean uses intimidation, what are the consequences in the short term as well as in the long term?
- B. If the Dean uses an IJ approach, what are the consequences? Are there differences in short-term vs long-term consequences?
- C. Alternatively, the Dean role could be modified to provide varying motivations. In one scenario, the Dean could be faced with the loss of his or her job unless the student cooperates while in another the Dean could be more sympathetic to the student’s position. Such manipulations could be reflected in the written assignments with directions that they not be shared with the student (although the observer would be privy to them). For example, would a Dean who is at risk of job loss be likely to decrease IJ behaviors and mute the student’s voice? Would a sympathetic Dean invite more value-expressive speech from the Student? It is also useful to point out that the “student” has some responsibility for enacting IJ behaviors as well as the

Dean. An important learning note is that the use of respectful treatment and sharing of information is bilateral (i.e., not just coming from the Dean) and is influenced by affective as well as cognitive considerations.

The above questions are designed to promote Learning Objective Nos. 2, 3 and 4. That is, learners should be able to understand when the use of IJ can mitigate the effects of negative outcomes in organizational decision making. Their affective response to the exercise should also be solicited. Although we expect that learners will enjoy the process, even those who express frustration or anxiety can do so in a safe place that allows them to air their feelings (negative as well as positive). Lastly, the above questions are not intended to be exhaustive. Indeed, we strongly encourage instructors to be creative in the questions they pose to their classes. Not only does creativity in questioning learners involve instructors more deeply in the exercise, it allows them to tailor the exercise to better capture the aptitude and needs of their learners. This section of the exercise promotes Learning Objective No. 5.

Suggestions for use of the exercise in large groups

The exercise can easily be adapted for use in large classes. The following points should be kept mind:

- A. There might be many questions from the group questions at the end of the exercise. What are the implications of this for people in authority positions? How does this affect your sense of what a manager should do? What should a professor do when meeting with students during office hours or conducting a class?
- B. This line of discussion can lead to some issues of organizational reality. Are there times when a less expressive approach is more effective? Are there times when we might discourage the use of the instrumental voice? How does this affect the long-term relationship of the involved parties? How does the use of omission of IJ behaviors affect the overall culture of the organization?
- C. In conducting this exercise in large classes, it might be difficult to create a great many role player and observer learning teams. This could be a function of room flexibility or the limits of class management. In this case, it is useful to create one or two role teams and allow the balance of the class to observe using the observer guidelines shown in Appendix D. Discussion

with this approach would comprise asking for examples observed of values expressive or instrumental voice. The Observer guidelines could also be collected to aggregate the data in order to report Observer findings to the group.

As a final class exercise to anchor IJ learning we suggest the use of another film clip. Any of several films described in Appendix B can be used with the goal of showing another example to students who now have familiarity with the concept and should be quickly able to see the effects of just and unjust behaviors. In fact, comedies (e.g., "Office Space") may well open up avenues of discussion more serious films might not suggest. Instructors should consider inviting students to identify and share films that would demonstrate just or unjust behaviors to further stimulate creativity in running the exercise. The difference between the interpretation of the introductory video and the ending example should be a powerful indicator of successful learning.

Permutations of the exercise

- A. *Reverse role play*: Given sufficient time, an interesting addition to the exercise is to have the Student and Dean role players trade roles and re-enact the 5-min meeting. This can build understanding of the need to use IJ in dealing with people of asymmetrical power. In addition, it can increase sensitivity of the choice of language when making requests of subordinates or co-workers. Debriefing for this activity would make use of the new experience with IJ and might include the following questions:
 1. Did you play the role differently having been on the opposite side of the power equation? In what ways were you different?
 2. How did you begin the conversation? Did you build in the opportunity for the Dean (or the Student) to use the values expressive or instrumental voice?
- B. *Repeat*: Another possibility is to have the students playing the Dean try the role a second time using more of the IJ script. In this variation, the objective for each role player is to increase his or her IJ behaviors. Repetition with feedback from the student role player as well as the observers can effectively anchor the behaviors that reflect an IJ-focused approach.
- C. *Organizational Experience Follow-up Assignment*: This assignment extends the learning of the



exercise beyond the classroom and develops observational skills in understanding the meaning and context of IJ.

In the event instructors are pressed for class time ask students to report on what they perceived during the exercise including, but not limited to, their feelings about what transpired. Such an assignment allows for a measure of reflection that in-class debriefing does not afford.

1. Ask students to report on a situation from their work or other organizational experience (e.g., clubs, teams) in which they saw firsthand the use of IJ in a meeting. This should be described in some detail with as much of the script as they can reproduce from memory. Relevant details of the situation should be included to provide context and meaning. A concluding paragraph should make a judgment regarding the short-term and long-term consequence for the parties to the conversation as well as the overall organization.
2. This assignment can be augmented by finding a situation in which the parties did not use the elements of IJ. In this case, the same questions of long-term and short-term consequence should be addressed. The implications of IJ for increased self-efficacy and organizational effectiveness should be reinforced through this reflective exercise in observation and analysis.

Difficulties and successes with the exercise

Understanding IJ is contingent on reflecting on the choices we make in our language. We believe this activity helps to develop the skills and knowledge of IJ by placing participants into situations of both ambiguity and choice in how to advance one's interests. Assessment of the efficacy of the exercise in creating better understanding of IJ is anecdotal. Participants have been generally intrigued by the various language choices made in each case by other students. An instructor can use this interest to achieve several ends: (1) Reinforce thinking about IJ; (2) Discuss the relationship between power, behavior and language; (3) Increase skills in conducting performance appraisals; and (4) Reinforce the idea that the just practice of management has an affective component (i.e., it is not enough to see the procedural and distributive aspects of the situation). The need to facilitate an individual's ability to be heard and to explain one's meaning and feelings is an equally powerful aspect of creating workplace justice.

In general, student response to this exercise is very positive. Although the case involves traditional age undergraduate students, that group, as well as part-time MBA students and executive learners in a management development program, had no trouble relating to the situation. However, a few undergraduate and MBA participants indicated that the issue of dorm damage seemed insufficient to provoke much pressure from the dean. In these instances, students mentioned their belief that the college is insured for damage and the regular, "normal" occurrence of this sort of damage makes it hard to sympathize with the Dean's need to pressure the Student. This consideration surprised the authors who hold a different sense of the issues of cost and responsibility for the situation. In these isolated cases, the instructor created a positive outcome by using the opportunity to discuss the differing expectations of behavior and justice in work and college life situations. In particular, the sense that there are different value systems in play opened the door to some interesting comments from students about adapting to the expectations of authority figures. For those instructors pressed for time or are otherwise disinclined to invite discussion, the consequences can be made more apparent and dire by including a high repair estimate and/or the fact that the college is self-insured at a time when its general operating fund is diminished.

In other student responses we discovered a belief that older authority figures need to adapt to the expectations and value systems of younger subordinates. In those cases, individuals did not think the dorm damage was significant. This was an unexpected but interesting consequence of the activity and another opportunity for some discussion of values, justice, and organizational reality.

A limited problem with the exercise came about in one instance when the role-playing Student simply stonewalled and stated that he had no knowledge of the incident. The use of this approach made it difficult and unlikely for any use of expressive or instrumental voice. In this case, the person playing the Dean soon ran out of enthusiasm for continuing the discussion.

Finally, several executive learners and older MBA students also mentioned that the role-play cases might be more compelling as a work situation rather than a student-dean interaction.

As with any activity, disappointing outcomes can never be completely negated. However, in this

exercise the outcomes generally created rich, teachable moments.

Conclusion

Overall, participants at several levels of education and experience have been positive in their response to the “Damage in the Dorm” exercise. They have reported positive outcomes in terms of interest and in experiencing learning in the area of IJ. A frequent response has been to reflect that this was a concept they should have known from experience. However, the students often did not have insight into their frustration in being unable to express themselves in difficult situations with authority figures. The exercise provides the structure to understand their feelings.

An additional area of interest is the recognition from the participants that those in authority

could change the perceived outcome of an interaction simply by allowing or encouraging some explanations and expression of feelings. One group of executive learners mentioned that attention to IJ might result in fewer grievances being filed against first-line supervisors. MBA students with work experience often comment that much of their experience with supervisors seems to entail only one-way communication. They suggested that the addition of reciprocal communication would have made a positive improvement in their own appraisal of well-being as an employee.

In sum, our outcome assessment of this activity is limited in data but suggests a significant increase in understanding IJ. We believe that this has been accompanied by a greater appreciation for the need to consider language and action that increases the sense of a just workplace.

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Appendix A

Key points to consider in Damage in the dorm

- What is happening between the Dean and the Student? Are meetings like this uncommon on campus or in the workplace?
- What does it mean to treat someone fairly?
 - Interpersonal justice
 - Informational justice
- Why are the concepts of interpersonal and informational justice important in organizational life?
 - Evaluation of authority figures
 - Commitment
 - Trust
 - Organizational citizenship behaviors
 - Performance
 - Satisfaction
 - Negative behaviors
- How can interpersonal and informational justice influence the Dean’s and Student’s speech?
 - Instrumental speech
 - Value-expressive speech
 - Differences in their impact

- What kinds of emotions would you experience if you were the student? How would you feel if you were the Dean? What impact does fair behavior have on emotions, if any?

Appendix B

See Table B1.

Appendix C

Interactional justice role play: Damage in the dorm

You are the Student

On the last day before semester break a couple of kids in your dorm had too much to drink and did a lot of damage to the student lounge. You are the last one left in the building and have been called in to the office of the Dean of Students to account for this.

Although you had nothing to do with the destruction of property you know who did. However, your personal code as well as the student culture strongly prevents you from giving up the names of the culprits as the Dean demands.

Table B1 Suggested films illustrating interactional (In)justice

<i>Film</i>	<i>Scene</i>	<i>Unjust behaviors</i>
Scent of a Woman (1992)	Head of school meets with student to discover culprit behind vandalism	Authority figure trying to coerce information from a student by threatening loss of scholarship
Back to School (1986)	Economics Professor attempts to show up Rodney Dangerfield in class	Authority figure not showing respect for student’s business acumen; No allowance for student’s speech
Norma Rae (1979)	Plant managers attempt to intimidate Sally Field’s character to desist in union organizing activities	Authority figures being physically and psychologically threatening
National Lampoon’s Animal House (1978)	Dean Wormer holds meeting in his office to announce that the Deltas’ grades are inadequate and that the students are being expelled	Lack of respect; Lack of explanation; No allowance for students’ speech
Office Space (1999)	Peter Gibbons meets with “the Bobs” (i.e., the management consultants)	This is actually a nice example of the instrumental and expressive voices in action. The consultants allow (encourage) Peter to give his interpretation of how things work at the company, what is actually rewarded, and how he feels about his work in the firm
Doubt (2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sister Aloysius Beauvier intimidates the other nuns at dinner. 2. Sister Aloysius meeting with Father Flynn in her office as he asks, “Where is your compassion?” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authority figure not showing respect for subordinates; No allowance for other’s expressive speech 2. As one character unsuccessfully tried to influence another

You do not want to be dismissed from school and you cannot afford to lose your scholarship.

What you really want to do is to explain to the Dean your position as an uninvolved bystander as well as your reluctance to violate your personal sense of loyalty to fellow students.

Your Task in this exercise is to:

1. Decide on goals for the meeting with the Dean. What do you want to accomplish? What do you plan to say in order to resolve this problem in a way that is acceptable to you?
2. You will meet with the Dean for just 5 min to explain things. After 5 min the Dean will end the meeting.
3. Your choice of language in the meeting with the Dean should be to use what you think is best for the situation.

Interactional justice role play: Damage in the dorm

You are the Dean of Students

The day before the semester break always seems to bring out the worst in the students. This time University property was destroyed in a senseless act of vandalism to a dormitory lounge.

This has happened several times in the past and is expensive, annoying and destroys more than furniture. The very fabric of a University community is threatened by this disrespectful behavior.

You are certain at least one student knows who did the damage and have called that student in to your office. You know students do not like to inform on each other but someone needs to be held responsible for the damage. It also helps that withholding information about a crime is also an infringement of the University disciplinary code.

In addition, this particular student owes something to the University for providing a generous need-based scholarship. You plan to make this meeting short and to the point.

Your Task in this is to:

1. Decide on your goals for the meeting with this student. What do you want to accomplish? What do you plan to say to resolve this problem in a way that is acceptable to you?
2. You will meet with the Student for just 5 min to explain things. After 5 min you will end the meeting.

3. Your choice of language in the meeting with the student should be what you think is best to use in this situation.

Appendix D

Interactional justice role play: Damage in the dorm

Observer rating guide for the Dean's behavior

On the basis of the Dean's verbal and nonverbal communication in the meeting with the student complete the checklist below:

- 0=Little evidence
- 1=Some evidence
- 2=Strong evidence

Treated the student in a respectful manner
 Refrained from coercing the student to cooperate
 Gave the student a full explanation of the reason for the meeting
 Seemed sincere in explaining his/her point of view
 Invited the student to explain his/her position
 Allowed the student to express his/her thoughts and feelings in general
Total points (0–12 points)

Your overall impression *based on your observations* of the Dean's behavior:

-
- 5 Clearly treated the student as a person with dignity; candidly explained the reasons and goals for the meeting; actively listened to the student's position; urged the student to express his/her thoughts and feelings in general
 - 4 Treated the student respectfully; explained the reasons and goals for the meeting in a business-like manner; gave the student the opportunity to express his/her side
 - 3 Acted in a respectful manner with the student; minimally explained the reasons and goals for the meeting; heard the student but appeared to take his or her position lightly
 - 2 Was condescending to the student; barely explained the reasons and goals for the meeting; heard the student's position but did not appear to take it into consideration
 - 1 Was condescending to the student; reasons and goals for the meeting were vague; certainly did not take student's position into consideration; seemed unfazed by the student's thoughts and feelings in general
 - 0 Showed utter disrespect for the student; completely failed to explain the reasons and goals for the meeting; prohibited the student from explaining his or her position; discouraged the student from expressing his or her thoughts and feelings
-

Observer rating guide for the student’s behavior

Interactional justice role play: Damage in the dorm

On the basis of the Student’s verbal and nonverbal communication in the meeting with the student complete the checklist below:

- 0=Little evidence
- 1=Some evidence
- 2=Strong evidence

Treated the Dean in a respectful manner
 Refrained from insulting the Dean
 Gave the Dean a full explanation of the reasons for his/her position
 Seemed sincere in explaining his/her point of view
 Allowed the Dean to explain his/her position
 Allowed the Dean to express his/her thoughts and feelings in general
Total points (0–12 points)

Your overall impression *based on your observations* of the Student’s behavior:

-
- 5 Clearly treated the Dean as a person with dignity; candidly explained the student side; actively listened to the Dean’s position; welcomed the Dean’s thoughts and feelings in general
 - 4 Treated the Dean respectfully; explained student side without rancor; gave the Dean the opportunity to express his/her position; listened to the Dean’s thoughts and feelings in general
 - 3 Accorded respect to the Dean; adequately explained student side; seemed open to the Dean’s position; allowed the Dean to express thoughts and feelings in general but appeared unmoved
 - 2 Was ambivalent toward the Dean; minimally explained student side; heard the Dean’s position but did not appear to pay attention to it; passively listened to the Dean’s thoughts and feelings in general
 - 1 Was disdainful of the Dean; gave a vague explanation for student side; seemed disinterested in the Dean’s position; failed to listen to the Dean’s thoughts and feelings in general
 - 0 Showed utter contempt for the Dean; failed to allow the Dean to explain; disregarded the Dean’s position; ignored the Dean’s thoughts and feelings in general
-

Appendix E

See Table E1.

Table E1 Debriefing matrix

Group	Dean’s behavior [I] behavior]	Level of satisfaction	Student’s behavior [Speech]
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Appendix F

Examples of the types of speech the Dean could elicit from the student

A. Instrumental speech [Words that are intended to influence an authority figure to make a decision that is favorable to the speaker (e.g., a student arguing to an instructor that a grade is unfair in hopes of having it changed).]

- “Tell me exactly what you saw the night of the incident in as much detail as possible?”
- “The ones who destroyed school property would not hesitate to give up you to save their own skins. Why should you?”
- “I know you saw who did it but why do you feel the need to protect them?”
- “Tell me why I should not make an example of you by expelling you for your silence?”
- “Why should I believe you?”

B. Value-expressive speech [Communication that is valued for its own sake, not for the outcome to be expected (e.g., getting things off of your chest).]

- “You are an important member of our community. What would you do in my place?”
- “What’s bothering you deep down inside?”
- “Are you happy here?”
- “You remind me a lot of myself when I went to school.”
- “What is the ethical course of action here?”



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