

DESIGN REVIEW /  
OBSERVATION & HYPOTHESIS GENERATION

## I. INTRODUCTION:

As design educators, we most probably have experienced a number of very different jury environments. Design juries can certainly be highly charged emotional experiences for both students and jurors. They often provide a hearing for new ideas, and offer a process for generating alternative approaches to the design problem(s) being discussed. They can encourage students and jurors to explore together and discuss new philosophical approaches to design and criticism, and of course they provide a forum for the presentation of design projects. The jury gathers data (listens to the presentations and reviews the drawings / models), synthesizes this information and then offers evaluation feedback to the students. Juries can also provide lessons in the realities of 'due dates', in scheduling work efforts, and in the need to develop clear, concise, verbal and graphic presentation skills. They simulate real world demands placed upon the practicing professional architect, landscape architect, urban designer, or interior designer.

Unfortunately, juries do not always go as planned, things can go wrong, and the environment can quickly become unproductive and even hostile and destructive. Research in small group behavior, interpersonal communications, and effective leadership, as well as our own protocol

data on juries, indicates that design juries rarely operate at, or even near, their full potential for the efficient and enlightened education of students.<sup>138</sup>

This chapter will first focus on what components of intra-jury communications can and often do go awry, second, define the variables and units of analysis that our observations have led us to concentrate a major portion of this study upon, and third, discuss what hypotheses were generated from the subsequent observation and analysis of the data. Several of these hypotheses will be statistically tested in subsequent chapters of this section. As mentioned in Section II, the following synthesis of ideas is garnered from personal notes of past experiences as a design teacher, discussions and interviews with other design educators and their students, a national survey of design educators, post-jury student questionnaires, and a review of video tapes of the juries themselves. Consequently, the following observations represent a collection of opinion, bias, and 'fact', with the primary intention of more clearly describing the inner workings of design juries, and of suggesting possible remedies to the intra-jury communications impediments mentioned in the Section IV).

We repeat that these findings may not generalize. Although our sample sizes were relatively large in most portions of this study, the jury and studio environments of most schools vary considerably from year to year, and can be greatly altered with the addition or loss of only one or two personalities (student or faculty). This study aims to help develop ways for studying and discussing the jury environment, and to clarify some common problems found in design juries that may be relevant to different readers and design schools.

Although the next section may convey a rather negative impression of design juries as educational tools, most juries are relatively successful in evaluating students' design work and generating alternative design approaches for them. It is the missed opportunities and the subtle yet frequently destructive episodes that we focus upon here. Positive jury behavior and learning will be described at length in Chapters VIII and IX, Section IV.

The following portion of our analysis begins with several assumptions regarding student learning and the sort of jury environments that seem to promote it. These assumptions will be discussed in detail and statistically supported in the following chapters.

\*\* We assume that harsh, overtly judgmental, and disrespectful feedback to the students generally impedes student learning and the honest exchange / disclosure of information in the vast majority of situations. We have seen little evidence that truly 'thick-skinned' students or jurors exist.<sup>139</sup>

\*\* We assume that the old adage of "tough feedback approximates real-world situations", is largely untrue. Our personal experiences, observations and interviews all indicate that school design jurors can be significantly harsher and personally critical than most real-world clients. Perhaps a primary goal of design education should therefore be to focus more on the development of a student's interpersonal communications and cooperative leadership skills than on 'toughening' him or her up.<sup>140</sup>

\*\* We assume that sarcastic and or harsh juror criticism will often have a negative effect on student self-esteem and on subsequent student motivation and enthusiasm to engage in design activity.

\*\* We assume that student levels of defensiveness and anger are often inversely associated with the student's perception of the jury's willingness

to listen.<sup>141</sup>

\*\* We assume that cooperative idea building among the jurors and student will have a strong positive effect on several outcome variables, i.e. project grades, student motivation to carry on, student stimulation and engagement in the jury process, the incidence of meaningful inquiry by the jurors of the student, and student self-esteem and confidence levels.<sup>142</sup>

## II. STUDENT TO JUROR COMMUNICATION:

As mentioned in Section I, the studio environment provides the student with the opportunity to experiment with new design philosophies and procedural approaches to design. The jury should offer a forum in which to describe design procedures and form generators. The jury can simulate the professional world by preparing the student to both explain and defend design ideas to an interested audience, and to incorporate criticism in making the overall project stronger. Unfortunately, 'student-to-jury' lines of communication are easily blocked or distorted, and can become one-sided or one-way. The following elements in this dialogue can and often do go wrong.

### **Preparation, Anxiety & Defensiveness:**

It is an arduous task for the student to compress clearly and concisely one to eight weeks of three-dimensional thought into a ten to twenty-minute verbal presentation, and to defend it to an audience of highly skilled professionals. This experience can be especially demanding when the student perceives the jury environment to be hostile and/or critical in nature.<sup>143</sup> Many students operate under the assumption that, "I have ten minutes to talk while the jury looks for something to criticize, and then the jury has twenty minutes in which to score points; during which time it is usually safer for me to acquiesce and remain silent."

The student is often entering this situation exhausted and certainly a bit nervous after days of fervent work in the development of the design and graphic presentation. Anthony's study of the efficacy of design juries suggests that architectural students may in fact have more health problems than average university undergraduates, and she attributes this largely to their long, intensive design sessions in the studio.<sup>144</sup> The student has been concentrating on the two- and three-dimensional aspects of the design, usually giving little thought to its verbal presentation and subsequent defense. Frequently the only verbalizing of the project the student has undertaken occurred in diagrammatic /

shorthand discussion during prior studio critiques with the design teacher. In these situations, both parties are familiar with the project and little comprehensive / cohesive verbal delineation is needed.<sup>145</sup> Quite naturally the student will often be feeling a bit unfamiliar and uncomfortable with what are to him or her relatively new design concepts or philosophies. As the presentation proceeds, confidence may ebb, and the student may become anxious and defensive. All the while, s/he continues to struggle to explain and defend the conceptual origins, purpose, and developmental history of the design.

The student may play it safe and concentrate the presentation on mundane detail that is already explicit in the drawings, or spend time on matters irrelevant to either the purpose of the design exercise or the jurors. The student might nervously block out previously planned remarks, cut explanations short, nervously repeat, and finally sit back feeling foolish, and listen to comments and questions that might have been obviated had the introductory statements been presented better. The pace of the presentation usually slows, the student's tone of voice loses its assurance and becomes almost apologetic, and a very unproductive and awkward situation can follow.<sup>146</sup> The situation is precarious in that the jury may become bored, inattentive or impatient to



speaking. Jurors may begin to interrupt the student, and the audience become essentially lost, the presentation becoming sidetracked or prematurely cut short by juror comments and or leading of the student. The student, sensing these problems, becomes increasingly anxious, defensive, and even hostile toward the jury. Communication falters; one-way dialogue ensues, and learning / listening become very difficult as hostility and defensiveness replace rationality and receptivity.

The following chapters exemplify many of the observations discussed. Most come from transcripts of our video tapes, together with observer comments regarding the setting or history of the participants. Some come from field notes or past experience. Although a few of the vignettes portray extreme jury behavior, they are all factually accurate. The following is a description of a very anxious female student presenter whom we observed in an advanced studio's developmental jury:

### "High Anxiety"

From the beginning, the jury itself was quite intimidating, comprising fourteen members, all male. Many were visiting experts who were seeing the project for the first time. The jurors appeared tired at the end of a long day of juries, yet they steadfastly continued to wear their suit coats and ties. They sat in a concave 'firing-line' configuration with the student as their focal point. Behind the jurors sat twenty-five to thirty student audience members. The presenter appeared quite tired, with

disheveled hair and drawn features, but she was nicely dressed in a business-like manner. The presentation began with her politely introducing herself to the jurors. She then drew a very deep breath, glanced at the notecards she had clutched in her hands and immediately forgot everything she was trying so hard to remember. Twenty or so excruciating seconds of complete silence passed, and the forlorn look that she gave her studio teacher at this point conveyed a sense of 'valiant panic'. The teacher smiled and nodded his head in encouragement, and she then forged ahead in a badly stuttered cadence. As she continued, the stuttering decreased into a fast muttering rhythm accompanied by vigorous hand gestures vaguely directed at both the drawings neatly arranged on the partition behind her, and her model. One juror interrupted and asked her to "speak up", and the fast muttering became fast, loud muttering. The jurors, whose eyes are roving the graphics, seem to not be well tuned into the ongoing presentation. The drawings and models show that this student is progressing with her design quite well. As the presentation enters its third minute, though, the student begins to pace back and forth in front of jurors, her eyes glued to the drawings, as if eye contact with the jurors might be risky. Her notecards, wrung into a small perspiration-covered tube, have not been referred to since the opening moments. She then begins to receive quick and impatient-sounding, functionally-oriented questions / interruptions from the jurors, i.e. "Why locate your service area here?" "Where is this section taken?" "Is this your control desk area?" As the student responds to these unrelated questions it is clear that she is beginning to lose her train of thought. Although her responses are competently rendered, they are unfortunately accompanied by nervous giggles which seem to greatly irritate her; they are apparently uncontrollable although they are emerging from her own mouth. Each time she attempts to return to her original line of commentary the content appears increasingly disjointed. After being interrupted for the third time, she abandons any attempt to explain her original design intentions and early design-decision priorities. Instead she focuses on walking the jury through her already graphically explicit plans, (functionally orienting the jury). The jurors respond to this focus on mundane detail by impatiently standing and walking all around her to look at the drawings and models. Sometimes jurors walk between her and the other jurors, further interrupting her. Seated jurors whisper to one another; some smile. A fourth interruption with a critical flavor to it, ("I don't see how this control desk layout can possibly work.") stops her altogether. After she tries to respond to this rhetorical question, she stands silently, fanning herself

with the rolled-up notecards; she now appears fully acquiescent to subsequent juror commentary. As the jury continues, she begins answering the jurors long before they have finished asking their questions. It is almost as if she realizes that she knows more than the jury thinks she knows, and to avoid further negative comments she will attempt to pre-empt them in the asking. This behavior quite naturally aggravates an already impatient and tired jury into more interruptions of the student and of one another as well. The proceedings deteriorate rapidly, and the jury focuses on one or two issues with the student responding in a desultory and defensive manner for the remainder of her jury.

What a grand waste of student and juror time and energy! We suggest that negative impact of this jury will likely serve to increase this student's anger, defensiveness and anxiety in subsequent juries, and that little of the jury's feedback will have a lasting or positive effect on her or her project.<sup>147</sup> A common post-jury remark by students reflects this situation well: "they did not really listen or understand me". What a dismal commentary on any jury, whether the remark is true or false. Of course several different factors can contribute to this type of circumstance:

\*\* the student was ill-prepared and therefore unaware of which elements should be discussed, what the jury needed to hear, what the jury wanted to hear.

\*\* the jury was impatient and rather than listening, concentrated on what they would say; they were 'out hunting' for weaknesses in the drawings

during the student's introduction.

\*\* the student never fully developed nor understood the design and therefore could not clearly explain it to others.

\*\* both parties were unaware of one another's needs / desires.

What does the student need in this situation? 1) A fair opportunity to have his or her ideas heard. 2) A way to safely express doubts about the design. 3) A safe way of soliciting assistance, along with the assurance that the jury is there to educate and offer options and not necessarily to challenge or destroy the student's self-image. 4) Honest, constructive commentary. 5) A sense that the process was well run and fair. 6) A proper grade.

The third item listed really speaks of an individual's 'fear of change', a very powerful and protective emotional defense, one which is obviously intensified in critical environments such as many juries offer.<sup>148</sup> Fear can cause the student to become quite defensive when faced with an overtly judgmental jury. In many instances, design requires that aspects of the designer's personality be displayed throughout, so that the designer (student) is really being asked to defend this personal display of values and attitudes in front of what is perceived as a disparaging board of

reviewers. When the design is critically judged insensitively, the student cannot help but feel attacked as a person. His or her own self-image is being directly challenged as the jurors are in effect asking for a personality change to fit their point of view. The jury has powerful leverage over the student in the form of grades and, more importantly, approval or disapproval. Their judgments are most often passed in front of the student's peers, who are also perceived as potential judges of the student's 'worth', and therefore constitute another challenge to self-image.<sup>149</sup> The following series of incidents occurred during an introductory studio's final jury, and may serve to further illustrate how juror behavior might stimulate student defensiveness and anger.

### "Disrespect & Defensiveness"

The jury had a slightly informal air about it; the students and jurors were dressed quite casually. The student audience was seated in chairs and on the floor behind and around the edges of the jury haphazardly. A minority student was presenting his project in a relatively fluent and energetic manner. He was dressed with a studied casualness, overall jeans and a funky pork-pie hat on his head. Although it was well-developed and well-presented, his solution was somewhat controversial, and certainly represented a departure from those of most of the other students. In the latter half of his presentation, one young male juror began his assault on this solution and student. This juror had a 'James Dean-like' quality to his dress and mannerisms, from the rolled-up sleeves on his white T-shirt, to the various sprawling postures (poses) he assumed in his chair. The assault began approximately three minutes into the student's presentation when the juror stood up, walked to the plans behind the student, slightly shook his head as he scanned

them closely, and returned to his seat with a somewhat condescending smirk on his face. The student didn't see the smirk, as it was not intended for him, but for the student audience and one other juror. Once returned to his sprawling, the juror made several whispered side comments. A juror on one side shook his head and smiled knowingly, and this time the student noticed the juror's actions. During this time the student and the student audience began to sense what sort of commentary was on the horizon. The presentation lost its energy as if the student was preparing for a siege, and as he completed the final remarks of his presentation, up went the defenses. As if to escape the impending line of fire, the student moved off to the extreme edge of the presentation, leaned against the wall with his arms crossed on his chest and glumly stared at his feet. The juror then reclined himself into a lawn chair type pose with his hands clasped behind his head and let out a long audible exasperated sigh, launching into a discourse on the student's ill-chosen geometries in a voice dripping with condescension. He played his remarks to the student audience, and filled them with skillfully humorous remarks. The audience and jurors laughed frequently, but the student appeared to find little humor in the statements. Although many of this juror's remarks were quite incisive and perceptive, the method of delivery was at best deprecating, as the juror played the audience for laughs at the student's expense. The student's anger was obvious as he grimly stared at the juror, and refused to respond to the commentary. At this point, I imagine he somehow wanted to hurt the jury in return. The juror closed his commentary with, "If I was the designer here I would begin by taking all of this junk out of here," (gesturing across the entire plan) and begin again. Several of the jurors seemed somewhat embarrassed by this performance, yet they unanimously focused on very similar comments to those of the offending juror. The student eventually sat down behind the jurors and remained silent for the final ten minutes of the jury.

This was a rather extreme example of a behavior we have labeled 'playing to the audience'. Unlike our previous example of the interruption-prone jurors, this particular individual was most likely aware of the impact of his remarks on the student. It certainly appeared to be

a rather thoughtless and mean-hearted performance, and we believe that jury leadership could have greatly reduced the student's agony and the general ineffectiveness of this jury in several different ways, i.e. by countering with explicit supportive comments, questioning the critical juror for positive suggestions or further clarification, diversifying the topics discussed, or lightly admonishing the juror and student audience for laughing, with a "be careful, you might be next" type remark. All of these suggestions will be discussed at length in Chapter VIII.

Such situations can increase defensiveness and hostility, and reduce the student's general receptivity to learning. The student might overreact to comments perceived as criticism, or feign indifference toward the jury's opinions and therefore antagonize the jury. The circular dynamics of this process can be devastating to an environment ostensibly conducive to creative thought and the sharing of information. As described by Luft and Ingram in their *Johari Window* model of human interaction, an individual's perceptual aperture, (his window to the world), constricts dramatically when he or she feels personally threatened, and this threat can significantly reduce the opportunity for learning.<sup>150</sup> Overtly judgmental situations in a public setting, i.e. design juries, would seem to describe just such a menacing situation. Ingram and Luft add that as

this personal window opens through building up of mutual trust and understanding, and non-judgmental listening, the potential for learning increases strikingly. Personal experience as a design teacher, coupled with the observations made throughout this study, corroborate these assertions. This study therefore assumes that harsh, overtly judgmental, and disrespectful feedback to the students is generally counterproductive to student learning and to the honest exchange / disclosure of information.

The preceding situation, and the defensive posture it produced in the student, naturally leads to a discussion of students' listening skills in jury environments. An anxious and fatigued student with defenses up is not in an optimum frame of mind to listen sensitively to the comments of others.<sup>151</sup> Often the defenses are raised days before the juries actually occur. One prior unsatisfactory experience or the observation of one especially critical jury can prejudice the attitude of the student before the actual jury begins.

The following is a description of how faculty / juror misbehavior can eventually affect the tone of juries across entire schools and entire generations of students. One of the individuals described below has



helped define juries as a 'trial-by-fire' ordeal for design students over the past twenty years and is still going strong. I have chosen to present several separate excerpts of rather excessive behavior that I believe greatly influenced the thinking of many of the students at these schools regarding jury process and content as well as acceptable juror behavior. These are not isolated incidents, but repetitious behavior that we have witnessed in several colleagues in several different locations over the past fifteen-plus years. It is important to recognize that the colleagues of these individuals, myself included, have tacitly accepted this sort of behavior, and except for one violent incident described below, I am unaware of any concerted faculty effort to enforce change in any of these individuals, or in the schools' general jury process and content.<sup>152</sup>

### "Trials by Fire"

Although it did not occur in a jury, the following incident did affect the students' attitude greatly, and set a tone that carried over into subsequent juries with this particular individual. This first episode began when a short, vigorous, eagle-eyed man strode to the podium during the initial lecture of a course entitled "Determinants of Architecture"; a course designed to offer prospective students a well-rounded exposure to the profession. It was an impressive lecture hall newly built for the College of Architecture, and filled with students who appeared to average eighteen to nineteen years old. Most had very little knowledge of the field, but they were excited to be in the University, intimidated by the 'newness' of it all, yet uncluttered with preconception. The speaker paused for several moments, stared across the audience and then began to speak in a graveled baritone voice, "Those of you who would

not have accepted the commission to design ovens for Nazi concentration camps can leave now, this class and this profession will have little use for you."

I often wondered how many of those who silently filed out of the lecture hall in dazed amazement ever returned to give architecture a second chance, and how the ethics of the profession have been affected by those who remained?

Another incident involving this same individual occurred in a jury for an introductory design class that was informally held in the studio itself. The students were sitting and standing around each student presenter's desk as three jurors roved through the studio randomly critiquing the designs. This was the students' first exposure to public criticism in the school, and it was an anxious moment for them. They had very little idea about design or designing, and they had little idea of what to expect from the jury. In fact few of them had any idea if their designs were acceptable at all, but this situation was to change quickly. The trio stopped at one student's desk and stared at the meticulously rendered drawings taped to the desktop. The student's confident smile slowly dissolved into horror as one juror forced his finger beneath the tightly secured drawing and slowly began to lift until the paper tore. As he continued to tear the drawing in two he calmly said, "I want all of you to learn to not hold your drawings sacred, they mean nothing until the building is built." What the students learned at that moment most likely had very little to do with emotional attachment to drawings. A wonderful opportunity to sit around and talk about design, and to 'turn-on' a room full of young and eager students was pre-empted by one individual's unchecked behavior.

Another example of juror shock-tactics employed the use of student models. On one occasion several years ago a teacher / juror asked his class in studio to not miter the corners of their models; to leave the joints exposed and overlapping. The reasoning behind this statement was left slightly ambiguous. During the first developmental juries following these instructions an older and very bright student presented his model with, of course, mitered corners. As he was explaining his partiality for the smooth finished appearance he had achieved, the juror asked to see the model and calmly dropped it to the floor whereupon he proceeded to grind it into a small mass of uneven sticks with the heel of his shoe.

The student was outraged and with trembling lips started toward the juror, but was quickly restrained by the other students and jurors. In a series of developmental juries following this incident the student refused to change his design, and the juror relentlessly continued to crush the models, some with forearm smashes and others with the agonizing heel-of-the-shoe technique. The student eventually dropped out of the college and enrolled in medicine. One can only imagine how many other potentially sensitive designers this individual's behavior has alienated and sent elsewhere.

One final example of juror behavior affecting a jury's proceedings and subsequent student perception of juries, occurred between two jurors in an argument over a student's use of arches versus orthogonal framing methods. The student was attempting to achieve a regionally appropriate response to a middle-eastern context, and his studio teacher (a pro-post-modernist) consequently encouraged the use of pointed arches. This same advanced studio's final jury was then attended by one of the school's most fervent proponents of modernism. The modernist, knowing full well the developmental history of the project and the post-modernist's influence on it, began his commentary with the following, "The use of arches in this situation is immoral, and a foolish shallow gesture to an irrelevant past." The dialogue went straight downhill from this point, and in fact became so heated that the jury carried over into the men's bathroom during an intermission where the debate finally resulted in the modernist wearing sunglasses in the studio for a week or so to cover his black eye. The juries were polluted with self-conscious and inclement feelings for months after that incident, and I imagine the students remembered it every time they presented.

Although somewhat extreme and at times humorous, examples of this sort of disrespectful and careless behavior occur often enough to leave indelible imprints on the memories of most design students. These recollections can prejudice student attitudes toward our traditional, unreconstructed system of design review and can also encourage

disaffection and defensiveness as well. Consistently disrespectful behavior by jurors will likely be reciprocated by the students in some less overt form. When jurors do not listen well, that attitude may become communicable to the students as well. Architectural education does not typically concern itself with the direct development of student listening skills, which are assumed to just 'be there' when the appropriate time arises. They are not perceived as professionally relevant skills that can be learned or enhanced. The curriculum often emphasizes individuality to the extreme, with only token amounts of team-work required in design.<sup>153</sup> There is also little use of clients in the design process, to hone students' listening skills. These attitudes toward teamwork and listening certainly do not approximate the real professional world's demands on the Architect. It is difficult to imagine any building, from residential to very complex scales, that was not in some way the product of team thinking.<sup>154</sup>

#### **Variable Description / Preparation, Anxiety and Defensiveness:**

**Preparation:** students' preparation for the verbal presentation and defense of their projects is most often neglected by both them and their studio teachers. Our study developed a post-jury questionnaire to

assess this phenomenon under the following variables: (please see Appendix IV).

**\*\*note:** all variables were presented as a 1 to 7 numerical scale, except PREPD and PREPE which were presented as 0 to 1 scales, (no or yes).

**PREPA:** measures the student's perception of how well prepared her/his verbal presentation was prior to their jury.

**PREPB:** measures how well the student's studio teacher prepared the student for his/her verbal presentation.

**PREPC:** measures how frequently the student's studio teacher undertook post-jury evaluations of her/his overall performance in the jury.

**PREPD:** asks if the student developed a written outline of his/her verbal presentation prior to their jury.

**PREPE:** asks if the students practiced their verbal presentations in the presence of another student or teacher prior to the jury.

**Anxiety & Defensiveness:** as noted, students often enter their juries exhausted and anxious.<sup>155</sup> Exhaustion and anxiety may contribute to inability to accept and process jury criticism, and may also explain subsequent defensive or hostile reactions to criticism. Our questionnaire

therefore attempts to assess student pre-jury physical and emotional states through the following variables:

**EMOTA:** measures the student's own assessment of her/his pre-jury level of anxiety.

**EMOTB:** measures the student's own assessment of his/her pre-jury level of alertness.

**EMOTD:** measures the students' own assessment of their highest level of defensiveness experienced during the jury.

**EMOTE:** measures the students' own assessment of their highest level of anger they experienced during jury.

**JURYA:** measures the students' perception of the jury's willingness to listen to their presentation and comments during the jury.

**JURYB:** measures the students' perception of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating them during the jury.

#### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that fewer than fifty percent of students outline (PREPD), or practice their verbal presentations (PREPE) prior to their jury.

\*\* that fewer than fifty percent of the studio teachers actively prepare their students' verbal presentations with them prior to the jury (PREPB).

\*\* that preparation on the verbal presentation, alone and with the studio teacher, (PREPA&B) will have an inverse association with pre-jury anxiety, and defensiveness during the jury (EMOTA&D).

\*\* that preparation on the verbal presentation alone and with the studio teacher will have a positive association with subsequent juror idea building during the jury.

\*\* that student anger (EMOTE) will have an inverse association with how well the jury is perceived as willing to listen and also with the effect of the jurors' remarks on the students' self-esteem (JURYD).

### **Interruptions:**

Although on occasion, students have welcomed strategically timed, prompt-like interruptions to their presentations, observations of the videos strongly indicate that interruptions can seriously disrupt intra-jury communications.<sup>156</sup> In student-to-juror communications, interruptions of the student can send an array of implicit messages. They can be very disruptive to the students' train of thought and the fluidity of their verbal presentations. We surmise that these interruptions (**ISP**) can also encourage students to 'second guess' the value / validity of what they are saying, and of their design as well. We believe that this type of interruption can also send the implicit message to the student that the

jurors are impatient with the presentation, or that they do not respect the jury process, the student, or the project enough to allow for a fair-hearing. Interruptions to student presentations (**ISP**) occurred at a rate of .6 per jury, with total number of interruptions to the student (**ITS**) averaging 1.6 per jury. One school averaged twice this rate on both measurements, and we have counted as many as nineteen ITS and seven IPS interruptions in one jury.<sup>157</sup> The unfortunate result of such interruptions is that the student often appears to lose confidence, and begins speaking about mundane functional detail already apparent in the drawings. As discussed earlier, this can exacerbate the situation, boring the jurors, making them more likely to interrupt the presentation. Interruptions appear to be contagious. Our observations show them occurring in clusters. We have also noted that interruptions which contain especially negative comments will often stop the student's presentation altogether, the student completely relinquishing the floor to the jury. At times a student will attempt to reciprocate the interruptions, but this usually results in a phenomenon we have labeled 'power interruptions'. These occur when two or more participants attempt to gain the floor through increases in the decibel counts of their interruptions until one prevails - talking over the others. We observed the student 'winning' only one of these shouting tournaments.



We have also observed that as the total number of interruptions of the student increases, cooperative idea building decreases dramatically in most juries, the general jury environment becoming polluted with sarcasm and rhetorical questions. This will be discussed at length in the juror / student communications section.

As mentioned earlier, there do seem to be moments in some juries when interruptions can actually assist the student. Often we see an overly anxious student begin to falter, hesitate and grope for words. On several occasions we have witnessed jurors stepping in at these times with a brief leading comment or question that harkens back to the student's original train of thought, i.e. "Would you please elaborate on your explanation of how you arrived at this site development concept?" This sort of 'benevolent' interruption seems to effectively reduce the anxiety of the students and to refocus their presentation back onto its intended path.<sup>158</sup>

#### **Variable Description / Interruptions:**

**ISP:** a count of the number of times the jurors interrupt the initial student verbal presentation.

**ITS:** a count of the number of times the jurors interrupt the student to gain the floor; this figure includes the number of ISP's.

**STIME:** a measure of the duration of the initial student presentation.

**JURYD:** an assessment by the student of how willing the jury was to listen to student comments.

**Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that an inverse association exists between the number of interruptions to the student presentation (ISP), and both the duration of the student presentation (STIME), and the percentage of the total jury time allotted to the student (STALK).

\*\* that an inverse association exists between the number of interruptions to the student presentation (ISP), and both the student's assessment of the impact of juror comments on his or her self-esteem (JURYD) and the student's assessment of the jury as a source of design information (JURYC).

\*\* that an inverse association exists between the number of interruptions to the student presentation (ISP), and the student's assessment of how willing the jury was to listen to the student (JURYA).

### **Prejudice:**

Although our sample is quite small (7 total or 6% of those studied), we did observe across three schools that African-American students seem to consistently average more interruptions to their verbal presentations (ISP), and receive a higher number of total interruptions during their juries (ITS) (ITOTAL), (please see Appendix I; data on juries for minority students). There appeared to be increased self-consciousness among the jurors with African-American students. Our observations led us to consider this condescension to be a subtle form of racial discrimination; the jurors seemed to be trying too hard, and to be over-compensating for their awareness of the 'possibility' of discrimination. At times the jurors would raise their voices as if they were speaking to someone with a hearing impairment, speak in more simplistic terms, avoid direct critical remarks, and generally make the jury atmosphere rigid and self-conscious, i.e. 'walking on eggshells'.

Female students also appeared to receive a form of sexual condescension in that they also consistently received more interruptions to their verbal presentations and more total interruptions, (please see Appendix I; data on juries for female students).<sup>159</sup> They also received less total time in their juries. The jurors seemed to avoid harsh direct

criticism and rhetorical questions, and to also move through female students' juries with a less detailed evaluation agenda in mind. This sort of sexual discrimination can become quite overt, and we believe it may lead to increased pre-jury anxiety for female students. They have witnessed or experienced this sort of discriminatory behavior in prior juries or in the studios, and quite naturally begin to raise their defenses long before their jury actually starts.

I have personally known design teachers who were quite prejudiced and chauvinistic toward female students. The following vignette describes a situation that I observed several years ago:

#### "The Bully":

I have known and worked with the following individual off and on for several years. He is an incredibly complex individual, full of contradictions and incongruous behavior. To describe him as a teacher and critic is difficult, as he can be sensitive and insightful on one hand, brutally sarcastic and discriminatory on the other. If you are a talented male student your problems with this individual should be minimal. The difficulties usually begin in the studio surrounding his awkwardness in critiquing female students. He would often avoid in-depth discussion of design issues with his female students, and was often quite authoritarian with them in his demands that they follow his guidelines explicitly. In the juries, slight deviations from his instructions could bring harsh verbal abuse, and most of the female students eventually succumbed to the relentless pressure. Their pre-jury anxiety levels were quite high, especially for those who chose to think and design independently. It appeared that this teacher / juror's need for control of his students would often lead him to totally abandon the independent thinkers in the juries and at times even publicly debase their efforts before the other jurors.

Tears were common and many of his female students felt as though they were merely drafting up his ideas. It got to the point that a rather morbid tradition developed among female students where a supply of tissues was secretly handed out to each one entering his juries for the first time.

As the number of female students began to increase in the nineteen-eighties his discriminatory ways became more apparent. One particularly outspoken and talented female student was assigned to his advanced design studio. The verbal battles were awful between these two, and quite disruptive to the class and juries. Tearful scenes were common, but the student persevered and pinned up an original and very good project for her final jury. Her jury was well attended as the entire school anticipated another fray. As she finished a fluent and well developed verbal presentation of her project her studio teacher immediately began to attack several relatively obscure points in the plan. He then moved on to a more personally oriented attack on women in the profession in general and how they were a disruptive force in the studios. At this point one of the faculty / jury members had heard enough, and grasped the offending juror by his shoulders and turned him to face the student's drawings. He then squeezed the juror's cheeks together between his index finger and thumb and pointed to the drawings with his free hand and said, "Now look at this project.....look at the quality of its presentation and the quality of its thought.....now say the word 'good' for all of us, G..O..O..D.....good, I know you can do it". Explosive laughter from the audience and jury followed this scene, as if a huge balloon of steam had burst and gone flying off out of view. Although the 'bully's' comments for the remainder of the day were meticulously fair, he did slowly revert to his former ways as time passed. Eventually a group of his female students kept detailed written accounts of his discriminatory practices throughout one semester, and presented these to the University Vice-President for academic affairs. Suit was filed against the school, but was eventually dismissed for lack of evidence. The teacher remains in his position today.

Although we see that a particularly strong student was able to combat this teacher's discriminatory practices, we also wonder how much more she could have accomplished given a more positive learning

environment. How much energy was devoted to personal defense and anxiety rather than to learning about design and designing? Another relevant question concerns how many talented but less forceful students were overcome by his oppression and either became his 'draftsperson' or left the profession altogether? The school's administration and most of the faculty did little to rectify an obvious and long-term problem.

Our observations indicate that racial and sexual discrimination may be relatively common in design juries. Although the preceding vignette is an extreme example, less obvious forms of the preceding behaviors occurred consistently throughout our observations. The issue certainly deserves more study in larger and more diverse samples of our design education system.

#### **Variable Description / Prejudice:**

**SSEX;** identifies the sex of the student presenter.

**SRACE:** identifies the race of the student presenter, i.e. Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic, other.

**TOTTIME:** a measure of the total jury time, including both the student verbal presentation and subsequent juror commentary.

### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that African-American students receive a higher than average number of interruptions (ISP) to their verbal presentations and also a higher than average number of overall interruptions (ITS) during their juries.

\*\* that African-American students' percentage of time speaking (STALK), in their juries is less than average.

\*\* that female students receive a higher number of interruptions (ISP) to their verbal presentations and also a higher number of overall interruptions (ITS) during their juries than average.

\*\* that the juries of female students are shorter than average.

### **Observer Bias:**

As mentioned in Chapter IV, we attempted to keep the camera as unobtrusive as possible. We located it off to one side and used the zoom lens in all cases. Although studies in the New York court systems indicated that the effect of the camera diminishes noticeably after two or three exposures, our observations showed that since the students were in a relatively tense situation and were rarely filmed more than once, they would often notice the camera's presence, especially during the initial stages of their verbal presentation when they were on center stage.<sup>160</sup>

We therefore began to count the number of times both student presenters and jurors would acknowledge (glance at) the camera or cameraperson. As level of arousal in the jury would increase and the inevitable interruptions would increase correspondingly, we observed that those actively involved in 'the heat of battle' would rarely notice the camera, but those jurors on the periphery of the commentary would be more likely to glance at the camera rather sheepishly, as if to apologize for their colleagues' behavior.

**Variable Description / observer bias:**

**CAMFAC:** a count of how many times jurors would acknowledge the presence of, or glance at the camera or cameraperson.

**CAMSTU:** a count of how many times the student presenter would acknowledge the presence of, or glance at the camera or cameraperson.

**Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that student presenters would acknowledge the presence of the cameras significantly more than would the jurors.

\*\* that a positive association exists between the total number of interruptions (ITOTAL), and the number of acknowledgements of the



camera by the students (CAMSTU).

\*\* that the incidence of idea building (IB) in the jury has an inverse relationship with the number of acknowledgements of the camera by the students (CAMSTU).

### **Observer / Actor Perceptions:**

Another issue that merits discussion here are student 'excuses', as they are most often perceived by the faculty or jury. Jones and Nisbett have done interesting research into the gap between the opinions of 'actors' (students) and 'observers' (teachers) about the causes of behavior.<sup>161</sup>

The student will often speak of environmental obstacles as reasons for a poor performance, i.e. "I had other homework", "I was too tired to concentrate", etc. The teacher, on the other hand, even though apparently outwardly sympathetic, will most often attribute the student's poor performance to either lack of ability, laziness, or perhaps neurotic ineptitude. Our experience would support their contention that faculty tend to believe that students look for excuses or seek to blame others or events for personal problems.

The research findings of Jones and Nisbett demonstrate that other powerful cognitive factors may be operant in this situation as well. They

concluded that, "Actors (students) tend to attribute the causes of their behavior to stimuli inherent in the situation, while observers (teachers) tend to attribute behavior to stable dispositions of the actor. This is due in part to the actor's more detailed knowledge of his circumstances, history, motives, and experiences. Perhaps more importantly, the tendency is a result of differential salience of the information available to both the actor and observer"...."The observer often errs by over-attributing dispositions, including the broadest kind of dispositions - personality traits. The evidence for personality traits as commonly conceived is sparse. The widespread belief in their existence appears to be due to the observer's failure to realize that the samples of behaviors that he sees are not random, as well as to the observer's tendency to see behavior as a manifestation of the actor rather than a response to situational cues."<sup>162</sup> Here again, the information available to the two parties is perceived in fundamentally different ways. Would not better listening skills for both parties help alleviate this problem?

### **III. JUROR TO STUDENT COMMUNICATION:**

The juror-to-student lines of communication are potentially some of the most productive in the entire jury process. They can carry indicators, insinuation, advice, approval, concerns, motivation, attributional

feedback, and a myriad of design ideas and alternative approaches to the challenges at hand. To educate and to learn certainly require that these lines of communication should work both ways. Therefore, the jurors need to demonstrate sensitive, well-developed listening skills, as well as the ability to verbally communicate three-dimensional ideas.<sup>163</sup> Our observations indicate that unfortunately, they cannot always do so.

### **Listening & Questioning:**

Listening is an underdeveloped skill in architectural education, as in other areas of education. We emphasize individuality at the expense of team-work. We isolate design problems and their programs from any social context that demands sensitive listening skills. We train our students to 'speak' graphically, ("let the drawings do your talking"), and we often disregard the need for our students to have real dialogue with clients concerning the client's needs, aspirations, aversions, anxieties, etc. These attitudes are quite naturally carried into the profession and in turn, back into the faculties of our schools of architecture. It is an arrogant deficiency, and one that should be examined with change in mind.

As previously mentioned, students can, and often do, struggle with the verbalization of new concepts, (ideas likely to be quite familiar to their

audience of jurors). At the very moment when the jury can become bored and easily diverted from the task at hand, the student most needs their indulgence and attentiveness. The student may be fearful of expressing points of view, especially those which might run contrary to some juror's known philosophical leanings, but hidden within their sometimes hesitant presentations can be numerous messages and cues to the real meaning of the design and real concerns of the student.<sup>164</sup> Jurors must therefore listen with skill and sensitivity.

As mentioned, the jury's primary duty is not only to evaluate the students' design products, but to try and understand their thinking and decision-making processes, and to then cooperatively build upon the students' original design intentions or to suggest alternative approaches.<sup>165</sup> Sensitive listening would seem to be a prerequisite to sensitive questioning. Surprisingly, our observations indicate that real questioning of the student is not that common a juror behavior. We use the term 'real' to denote sincere, non-rhetorical questions; ones that seek an answer to 'non-functional' design or process issues, i.e. "Would you please explain the decision-making priorities that led you to choose that structural system?" Rather than functionally oriented questions such as, "Where are your north arrows?". Rhetorical questions are frequent and

seem to be associated with interruptions, and incidence of issue focus and or juror opinion polarization. Rhetorical questions are often disguised as real ones, and delivered to the student with a concerned and caring look on the juror's face.<sup>166</sup> We have seen numerous examples of this manipulative communication technique, the studio teacher beginning ostensibly to question the student, but in actuality having a hidden agenda and conveying several messages at once:

\*\* to other jurors: frustration over this student's refusal to follow instructions in the studio prior to the jury, and the juror / teacher feels strongly about this issue and would like his or her colleagues' support.

\*\* also to the jurors: absolution of any personal responsibility for such a 'travesty' (the student's project).

\*\* to the student: 'the last word' on whatever issue they had been at odds over in the studio.

On the other hand, 'real' questions seem to occur in jury environments that contain more than average numbers of examples of cooperative idea building among jurors, and a higher percentage of participation in the proceedings by the student presenter.

The following are transcripts of a rhetorically-inclined juror in action. This individual was observed over several juries, and consistently employed rhetorical devices to disguise his true intentions, which became clear through his or her subsequent statements and behavior. The play actually seems unconscious and I believe the juror is unaware of how transparent and disrespectful the habit appears to his students.

### "Mr. Rhetorical"

The following transcripts were collected during the opening juror commentary of a preliminary jury for an advanced studio. There are five other jurors present and a student audience of ten or fifteen. The student presenter's studio teacher is the first to speak although there are four guest jurors present. Informal interviews with the student indicated that the issues discussed by this teacher had been discussed in the studio prior to this jury. The student chose not to respond to his teacher's suggestions to alter his design, and it would appear that the teacher spoke first to bias the opinion of the other jurors in support of his negative views on this student's site design. The teacher then further masqueraded his critical opinions with a very sincere tone of voice and a vague look of puzzlement on his face. The rhetorical questioning then began...." I have a question I would like to ask you....the general attitude you put into the architecture....very evocative and I'm sure it will be exciting....there is in the general site plan a general sense of banality....to the point of being Beaux Arts....ah, a rigidity about it that may have grown out of the program or a series of architectural ideas that you felt were appropriate to this particular project. However, what seems to be slightly perplexing to me....I'm not necessarily criticizing initially....until I know what's going on....is the sense that you begin to introduce a series of very formal gestures here, here and here (points to drawings), and yet when you put them together....when you carry them through they're never terminated or not quite woven together...for example this is a very, very strong axial situation and yet it doesn't end in any discernible axis or center, and yet this is housing and that is housing....same thing is true

here. This is a very important place in the scheme, extremely important, and yet you turn (the model) around and look at it here, its not terminated in any axial way, and the gestural moves that you make here at first seem very Beaux Arts and very rigid, and I am curious why these shifts occur....and whether that was part of your attitude about the architecture or at least the site planning aspect of the architecture, or whether it grows out of the project or a desire to loosen it up or not be too rigid,....I think...."

The student at this point then asks, "can I respond?" The juror goes on as if the student hadn't spoken.... "you're setting us up for a Beaux Arts relationship and I'm not sure this is appropriate at all here."

The juror's final, one sentence statement was all he/she really needed to say if he was not really interested in asking a question. Of course the option exists to truly discover the student's initial intentions without 'telling' him what you think he may have been thinking as this juror did. A simply phrased request could have gone something like this, "Please explain the developmental reasoning behind this approach to the site plan." If the student response does not seem satisfactory at that point, the juror can then begin to explain his qualifications of the student's reasoning and design approach. These comments should in turn be followed by some constructive idea building which could eventually include the ideas of other jurors as well. Informal conversations with students indicate that they usually pick up these rhetorical manipulations and realize that the juror does not really desire a response since he/she is obviously in a 'telling' frame of mind and not necessarily an 'understanding' one.

I believe that if this juror had the opportunity to observe this behavior through the eyes of the video camera and the other jurors, he/she would realize that this habit does hinder communication. He/she may even become concerned enough to modify certain aspects of this behavior. This sort of teacher / juror sensitivity training is discussed in Chapter VIII.

**Variable Description:**

**JURYA:** measures the students' perception of the jury's willingness to listen to his/her presentation and comments during the jury.

**JURYB:** measures the students' perception of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating them during the jury.

**JURYC:** measures the students' assessment of how effective his/her jury was as a source of useful design information.

**JURYD:** measures the students' assessment of the effect of juror commentary on his/her self-esteem.

**EMOTC:** measures the students' assessment of his/her level of post-jury motivation to engage in subsequent design activity.

**EMOTD:** measures the students' assessment of his/her highest level of defensiveness experienced during the jury.

**EMOTE:** measures the students' assessment of her/his highest level of anger experienced during the jury.

**REAL:** measures the total number of real (non-functional) questions asked of the student presenter, by the jurors, during one jury.

**RHET:** measures the total number of rhetorical questions asked of the student presenter, by the jurors, during one jury.

**IB:** measures the total number of times jurors would cooperatively build ideas or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of



the student.

**STALK:** measures the percentage of total jury commentary made by the student presenter.

**ISSUEF:** indicates whether a jury has discussed fewer than three central issues during any one jury.

### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that student anger and self-esteem have a strong negative association.

\*\* that student self-esteem will positively relate to the student's perception of how willing the jury was to listen to the presentation (JURYA).

\*\* that the student's perception of how effective the jury was as a source of design information (JURYC) will relate positively to his perception of the jurors' willingness to listen, and the student's subsequent motivation to continue designing.

\*\* that juries will average less than five real content oriented and non-functional questions per jury studied (REAL).

\*\* that the students' perception of how willing a jury was to listen to their comments will have a positive relationship with incidence of real questioning

(REAL) and idea building (IB).

\*\* that there exists a strong positive association between real questioning (REAL) and the total amount of student speaking time (STALK).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between real questioning (REAL) and the total number of interruptions (ITOTAL).

\*\* that there exists a positive association between the number of rhetorical questions (RHET) asked and both the total number of interruptions (ITOTAL) and incidence of issue focus (ISSUEF).

### Interruptions:

Interruptions are one form of what Goodman calls 'crowding'. He suggests that whether it is the occasional milder kind that most of us do, or the more serious, habitual kind, 'crowding' comes in three basic forms: 1) **Response-rushing**, which occurs when 'the listener' can't wait for the speaker to stop speaking; as if what they have to say is more important than anything the speaker could say. This often results in the speaker's feeling rushed, and spending time attempting to recapture lost ideas and trying to get a word in edgewise. Goodman believes that a single response-rusher can cause others to do the same, and that this

is often the start of the rush-cycle, and a prelude to interruptions; 2) **Interruptions**, are then a form of response-rushing that actually disrupts someone's talk in mid-sentence, or at the slightest pause. Goodman describes this process as the following: "Take a man and a woman. If the man jumps in before her last word is finished, she is more likely to clip off his last word. A chain reaction starts. As the escalation continues, the interruptions dig deeper into the sentences. Interruption begets interruption. And the more interruptions there are, the more incomplete messages there are, which builds frustration." There are understandable reasons for interrupting. Confusion is one. Another arises in response to undue repetition in the speaker's message and the urge to have the speaker 'get on with it'. Other interruptions arise from feelings of superiority or dominance over the speaker. This type of interruption can be quite alienating and can be hurtful to the recipient. Goodman believes that most of the time it is difficult to respond to interruptions done for dominance, over a long period of time, because most of the time we don't realize what is occurring, and all we understand is that we are feeling "rotten"; 3) As interruptions increase during a conversation, there is frequent mid-sentence disruption, and both talkers begin to interrupt at once. Goodman describes this phenomenon as 'over talk', where both talk at the same time, neither

yielding to the other in an extreme form of interruption.<sup>167</sup> In the protocol portion of this study, we labeled over talk as 'power-interruptions', and have included it in our interruptions-per-jury counts.

In many juries that we have personally experienced, filmed, and analyzed juror attitude is of 'telling' rather than 'exploring' and 'building'. In the preceding section on student-to-juror communications, we suggested that juror impatience and lack of self-discipline appear to relate to both the number of interruptions of student presentations (ISP), and the total number of juror interruptions to a student during the jury (ITS). Interruptions appear contagious, and some jury environments seem polluted with it. A series of careless or ill-intended interruptions can communicate to the student that the jurors are not listening; that they do not really care to listen, but instead want to talk and be heard.<sup>168</sup> We observed that interruptions can communicate that the jury process is fraudulent. The incidence of interruptions was positively associated with incidence of rhetorical questioning and issue focus, and inversely related to 'real' questioning; the amount of student participation in the jury; and incidence of idea building.

The balance of power is certainly in the jurors' favor especially if the jury

process is primarily non-interactive and judgmental. In these cases, disrespectful interruptions can slowly erode the students' confidence and transform them into passive, yet bitter targets, certainly no longer participants in the jury process.<sup>169</sup>

The following excerpt of jury behavior occurred during a relatively short final jury for an intermediate design studio. A minority student presented his project to a three-member jury, two males and one female (the jury leader). The jury leader is the primary subject of this vignette which was chosen to illustrate just how disruptive and contagious interruptions can become when leaders misuse their position and fail to mediate interruptions and encourage collective idea-building. This individual, although quite bright and energetic, has developed a habit of interrupting others to an almost debilitating degree, especially when she is in a leadership position.

This habit appears to be unconscious. An otherwise humorous, talented, and lively individual consistently alienates those around her, and stifles the creative atmosphere she speaks so frequently of trying to encourage. The following jury dissolved into an 'interruption fire-fight' as so many often do at this school. The final score was: jury leader, twenty-

five interruptions; juror #2, nine interruptions (and was the only one to attempt any clarification of the proceedings for the student); juror #3, fourteen; student presenter seven; and the student audience, six. The jurors, including three professors of architecture, (two PhD's)), with forty-eight interruptions among them emerged victorious. The grand total for this jury was sixty-one interruptions in twenty minutes and thirty seconds.

The interruptions begin almost at once. In the first three minutes of the presentation there are already four interruptions of the student by two jurors. The following interruptions are not excessively negative, but nonchalant. In fact, at only two points is the discussion even slightly heated. The critical factor here is not necessarily anger and tears, but the disruptive influence interruptions appear to have on the cohesion of the dialogue. The student is more often confused or intimidated by the disrespectful attitude of the jury. He/she may also learn that jury leadership often means 'power to interrupt', that many jurors not only disrespect the student but one another, and that often the individual with the largest lung capacity and greatest perseverance gains the floor. Out of the myriad of topics in need of discussion with each student, i.e. contextual response and site analysis, functional layout, structural and mechanical systems, building envelope, design process, etc.; few were

discussed by this jury. Interruptions seem to associate positively with issue focus, and negatively with idea building.

The following dialogue begins just after a four-minute-and-fifteen-second student presentation where the student explains a system of analyzing some of Aalto's works which allowed him to generate new design forms using a series of three-degree angles inscribed on the plans. Interruption-type and speakers are coded as follows: Speaker codes precede their comments and are in bold; student presenter (**SP**), jury leader (**L**), jurors (**2**)(**3**), student audience (**SA**). Interruption-type codes follow the comments that they interrupt; interruptions (i), power interruptions (pi):

### "The Intruders"

(2) "It's not the production of built form, it's too complicated and ..and....it's `prissy' in that"...(i)  
(L) "It's more than that, you can study endless possibilities"...(i)  
(2) "You can"...(i)  
(L) "You can say anything if you draw enough lines"...(pi)  
(S) "You can't very well draw a line like this"...(i)  
(L) "Yeah, but let's say that the points you have on that diagram and the number of lines you have and you let x"...(i)  
(S) "it's not that I have had the time to"...(pi)  
(L) "No you"...(i)  
(S) "but at least I'm trying to do"...(pi)  
(L raised voice) "Hey wait a minute"...(i)

(S raised voice) "I'm saying I wish I had the time to develop"...(i)  
 (2) "Let me ask him a question, I suspect...(i)  
 (L) "I"...(i)  
 (2) (speaks for twenty-five seconds as he effectively summarizes his thoughts on subject)...(pi)  
 (L) "I mean you want to know how bad it can get, when I was analyzing the Frank Lloyd Wright house, I used a two-foot grid and it was meaningless, but it got us inspired that there was a system in there....so I'm not deriding you for"...(i)  
 (2) "Well no I"...(i)  
 (3) "Wait now"...(pi)  
 (L) "It just has to be more meaningful to actually prove anything"...(i)  
 (3) "No, not necessarily, I mean there"...(i)  
 (SA) "Do you need more analysis"...(i)  
 (2) "absolutely you"...(i)  
 (3) "It's meaningless to compute the size of the angle, especially one so acute, (10 seconds inaudible)....and here's the key"...(i)  
 (L) "Wait a minute"...(i)  
 (3) "and use it in `modulized' form. I want to know whether or not this system (inaudible)...(i)  
 (2) "He has to measure angles and site angles for"...(i)  
 (3) (inaudible five seconds)...(i)  
 (SA) "I think at this point, that"...(i)  
 (3) "He must find ways to"...(i)  
 (L) "But he didn't take"...(i)  
 (3) "He seems to be repeating (inaudible five seconds)"...(i)  
 (L) "but the grade is only giving you a proportional system, its not giving"...(i)  
 (3) "It relates to a proportional system"...(i)  
 (L) "But it doesn't give you a spatial relationship"  
 (3) (inaudible ten seconds)  
 (SA) "I think in terms of Aalto though, I see what you're saying, but I think he might form it with wedges though. He might take the wedges and use them spatially to"...(i)  
 (L) "In practice I think you can start with things you know will work and (continues for thirty-five seconds in an incoherent manner the practical applications of using angles to analyze design)"  
 (SA) "This is something you use after"...(i)  
 (L) "Yeah, use after....I think you have to work on how you put the pieces together....and I like your investigation....It shows the use of layering....but I want to see what the layers are....just to say, `I use the



three degree',...just stops me"...(i)  
 (S) "No I"...(pi)  
 (L) "I'd like to see"...(pi)  
 (S) "I have a framework and "...(i)  
 (L) "but there's millions of three degrees"...(i)  
 (S) "but this plan's organized on"...(i)  
 (L) "Yes it does follow the three degrees, but how did you choose your three degrees?"  
 (S) "Based on some spatial ideas I had"...(i)  
 (L) "But what were they?"  
 (S) "The site basically was perceived"...(i)  
 (L) "But how did you put one down, but I think...this is your model here?"  
 (S) "Yes, this is the front, and that idea"...(pi)  
 (L) "What do you mean street or view here?"  
 (S) "ahh"...(i)  
 (L) (sighs heavily) "yeah, ok....I've got no further comments, does anyone else?"

(the jury is absolutely non-responsive, jurors appear quite bored and disenfranchised. The student walks away from his drawings and sits down off camera in a very desultory fashion).

(SA) "Can I ask a question....I would like to know what other ways we could look at a problem like this?"  
 (L) "Are you asking me?"  
 (SA) "yes."  
 (L) "I'd like to find out what the spatial units are"...(i)  
 (2) "I guess the only difference I have is there seems to be an excessive amount of measuring."  
 (S) "I think that when the brain sees this, maybe the mind doesn't recognize its"...(i)  
 (2) "Let me finish my point....(he proceeds to summarize his ideas in a very clear manner for twenty-five seconds)....(i)  
 (3) (inaudible five seconds)....(i)  
 (2) "Well that's fine but"...(i)  
 (L) "That's fine but also stands"...(pi)  
 (3) (inaudible five seconds, angry voice)....(pi)  
 (L) "But that doesn't tell me where"...(pi)

This tit-for-tat interrupting goes on for approximately ten interruptions,

and one-minute-and-thirty-seconds more. It finally dissolves into factional dialogue, with two or three conversations proceeding simultaneously. The jury ends with the leader shouting out, "Who's next?".

#### **Variable Description:**

**ITOTAL:** a count of the total number of interruptions of all jury participants (student and jurors) during one jury.

**ISP:** the number of times the jurors interrupt the initial student presentation.

**ITS:** the number of times the jurors interrupt the student to gain the floor; includes the number of ISP's.

**JURYB:** measures the students' perception of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating them during the jury.

**EMOTC:** measures the students' assessment of their level of post-jury motivation to engage in subsequent design activity.

#### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between the total number of interruptions per jury (ITOTAL), and the students' assessment of the jury's willingness to listen to them (JURYA).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between the total number of interruptions per jury and the students' assessment of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating their participation in the jury process (JURYB).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between the total number of interruptions per jury and the students' assessment of their post-jury level of motivation to engage in subsequent design activities (EMOTC).

### **Idea Building & Issue focus:**

Sensitive listening to and questioning of the student should provide a logical groundwork for equitable and relevant evaluation of student designs, and subsequent cooperative idea-building. These skills may also reduce incidence of juror opinion polarization, and undue focus on too limited a number of issues in a student's design.<sup>170</sup> Our observations, questionnaires, and interviews with jurors indicate that they often become inattentive, and bow to the pressure of 'finding something to say', or to their habitual search for 'errors'. I have known jurors who openly admit to essentially ignoring the student's opening statements. Frequently, as the student is speaking, the juror's eyes are roving over the drawings and models, fault-finding. Carl Rogers, who has written at length concerning these problems, suggests that fault-finding is an

almost instinctive approach to communication. We often judge and evaluate long before we have given a fair hearing to what the problem and its accompanying issues really are all about.<sup>171</sup> A number of jurors I have known and worked with over the years will almost immediately raise an audio screen to the student's presentation while looking for something to evaluate (inconsistencies, contradictions, errors), rather than trying to understand and build upon the original intentions of the student and his design, (idea-building). Students can easily sense this inattentiveness, and can become defensive and hostile at the show of disrespect.

### "The Parting Shot"

Some jurors find it very difficult to break away from negatively-oriented criticism. Even with exceptionally good projects such as the one in the following example, they need to 'take the student down a peg or two'. I have known jurors who are convinced that the juries are not the place to waste time with praise, but are for rendering criticism in an explicit and straightforward manner. Although I cannot substantiate this, I believe that this type of behavior can at times arise from juror jealousy of exceptionally talented students. The following excerpt is taken from the summary comments of one such juror. The following incident occurs at the very end of what has been a generally positive and constructive thesis jury of an exceptional project. All of the jurors have finished their comments, most of which were quite positive, the commentary idea-building very naturally and positively. This female student, although somewhat timid, had actively participated in the idea-building, and appeared to accept the jury's criticism quite well. The jury leader had thanked the student and wished her good luck as she moved on into the professional world. As he stood to leave, another seated juror took

his `parting shot':

....."You know, I'm not thinking as much in terms of her graphic skills as her presentation skills....but ahh....the thing I would look out for is.....you, you probably have a really big ego boost now, but my experience with the people in school was that the people that were most powerful in school often times were the least powerful in practice, and that's something you're going to have to look out for."

The juror then proceeded to stare her down until another embarrassed juror interrupted and moved the group on to the next student. `He really wiped that smile off her face.' Our observations of her presentation and responses to the questions showed this student to be very modest and almost shy, and there certainly was no indication of a distended ego.

What a terrible way to give a good student a sendoff into the `real world'. First of all we disagree that exceptional students often make unexceptional architects. It was a ridiculous and unfounded claim made in his struggle to find something negative to say; almost as if he perceived it as his duty. In my opinion it was an unfounded and somewhat cruel final slap at a very good student.

This generally negative / judgmental approach to design juries may give rise to a phenomenon we have labeled `issue focus'. "Issue focus" refers to jury behavior where the commentary converges on one or two issues around which juror opinion appears to polarize. Research in small group behavior has identified this phenomenon as relatively common in task-oriented groups. It has been demonstrated that group responsibility for a task can significantly inhibit the cognitive effort of its members.<sup>172</sup> Related research has also demonstrated that group responsibility initially

inhibits extreme opinion of members, but subsequent discussion can lead to opinion polarization, with the group becoming overly critical or complimentary in different situations.<sup>173</sup> Our findings suggest this may also be the case in juries. We frequently note a bandwagon syndrome, a few initial comments by one juror, especially the student's studio teacher, altering the entire atmosphere, the comments being repeated and exaggerated by subsequent speakers. Opening comments can be especially biasing when the student's own studio critic is the first to speak, and makes very explicit negative comments. Issue focus will be discussed at more length in the following section on juror-to-juror communications.

Another phenomenon that appears to hinder idea-building occurs when the juror feels the pressure to comment, and searches for something to say as he is speaking. In these situations, it appears that jurors disguise their predicament with a behavior we have labeled 'power vocabulary', masking the lack of something to say by a barrage of convoluted reasoning and rarified vocabulary. We will discuss this behavior more thoroughly in the leadership section of juror-to-juror communication. Idea-building and Issue-focus and the sequences of events that we have observed as associating with these two phenomena will be discussed

in more detail in Chapter VI.

**Variable Description:**

**JURYA:** measures the students' perception of the jury's willingness to listen to their presentation and comments during the jury.

**JURYC:** measures the students' assessment of how effective their jury was as a source of useful design information.

**EMOTC:** measures the students' assessment of their level of post-jury motivation to engage in subsequent design activity.

**IB:** measures the total number of times jurors cooperatively build ideas, or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

**STALK:** measures the percentage of the total amount of jury commentary made by the student presenter.

**ISSUEF:** indicates if jurors have discussed fewer than three major issues during any one jury.

**Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between issue focus (ISSUEF), and both juror idea-building (IB), and the student's assessment of the jury's usefulness as a source of design information (JURYC).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between incidence of issue focus (ISSUEF), and both the student's assessment of the jury's willingness to listen (JURYA), and an assessment of his own post-jury motivation levels to engage in subsequent design activities (EMOTC).

\*\* that there is a positive relationship between issue focus (ISSUEF), and the total number of interruptions in the jury (ITOTAL).

\*\* that there exists a strong positive association between idea-building (IB), and the student's assessment of the jury as a source of useful design information (JURYC).

### **Protectionism:**

Sometimes jurors debate or harangue one another through the student currently presenting. The comments may be only peripherally relevant to the student's design, and create a potentially confusing tangle of criticism. If the student's design teacher is absent or the jury does not 'protect' the student, the jury as an educational agent disappears, and the student becomes further alienated from the process. At times the jury needs to protect the student from uninformed criticism by guest jurors. In these situations, the student's studio teacher is the likely candidate to step in and clarify 'the rules of the game'; what constitutes fair criticism according to the problem statement and objectives, the



program, and the pre-jury studio commentary. So, 'protectionism' does have a rightful place in the jury process. Problems arise though when a juror begins to consistently defend the student even when the criticism is within proper bounds.<sup>174</sup> We have observed this phenomenon frequently. It seems to be associated with specific individuals and schools more than others. I have worked with two individuals who share this inclination, and I have been able to film them in 'the act of protecting'. Both are devoted design teachers and talented designers. Both share a 'hands-on' orientation, and influence the designs of their students a great deal. We believe that there is a connection between this teaching style, and their inclination to protect their students in juries. Perhaps they have invested so (too) much of themselves in the designs of their students that when the designs are criticized publicly, the urge to defend their students (and themselves) is difficult to resist. In addition, the teacher may have made so many decisions for the student that the student is unable / unprepared to defend him/herself; much of the thinking represented in the drawings and models is someone else's. Protectionism can significantly reduce student participation in the jury, and begin to alienate other jurors, who come to feel that to criticize this teacher's students carries possible retribution, or at least a public debate with the teacher with the student on the sidelines. Jurors can become

self-conscious and less open with their criticism and idea-building. They can also become angry, and rebel against this subtle coercion when they realize that the student is not the only designer being critiqued.<sup>175</sup> Under these circumstances, we have consistently observed an increase in interruptions.

### "The protector"

The following excerpt comes from a thesis jury in a school where 'protectionism' is common. At times the jurors themselves seemed to be on 'trial'. This incident occurred between a faculty juror and two guest jurors. The faculty member has a history of heavy 'hands on' teaching in his studios, like those previously discussed. He is seen here protecting one of his best students after jurors had made a series of comments regarding obvious inconsistencies between the student's design and his stated intentions. Jurors questioned the apparent arbitrariness of the student's stated choice of a particular 'style' for his building. The jury intimated that perhaps the student might better forget 'style' and just allow an image and a form to evolve more naturally rather than copy former fashions; his reasons for choosing the International style for this building seemed arbitrary. Although this jury had been complimentary regarding the student's efforts on this project, most jurors agreed on this particular criticism. Directly following the guest jurors' even-handed yet somewhat negative comments, the student's teacher steps in and answers for him: (protecting faculty (p), guest jurors (g1),(g2))

(P) "I think one of the things I mean to say....I think to argue over semantics is silly, because it's pretty well documented that when Frank

Lloyd Wright was asked what he meant by 'organic architecture', he gave at least fifty-seven different answers. (audience laughs)....So if (this student) stands up here and uses words to describe a project...ahhh....I would disagree with (juror 2) that there are no great architects who didn't have a strong sort of philosophy...(i)

(g2) "I didn't say that"...(i)

(p) "I can think of maybe Eero Saarinen and a few other architects who let the project generate the architecture....therefore I think you (the student) have clearly developed your own philosophy of architecture. Most of us....many of us don't ever develop a philosophy or it continually develops so long that we don't get it until late in our lives.

(This apparently condescending statement appears to be perceived as a direct insult by most of the jurors as they all lean forward, and two grip their chins and expel, what appeared to be, long exasperated sighs)

(p) "....anyway I think the toughest thing about presenting projects like this is....ahh....I've been teaching design twenty-one years now.... and this has got to be one of the three or four best I can ever remember, and so nobody has much practice in knowing what to say because it is so good...."

(I have heard this teacher use this phrase several times in the last four years)

(p) (to the student) "your abilities are so apparent that nothing really needs to be said other than something that would be conversational....obviously this is an incredible project and you're to be

commended. (Here the protector implies that guest comments have been merely `conversational')

(g3) "I think it's....I've been in practice twenty years and in juries for about ten....and you wait for something like this to happen so we have things that are fun to argue about, and we don't have to say, `Gee, you forgot a door here.' Which makes it fun to come to these things (juries). I've been doing it for ten or twelve years and this is by far the best project, but I think it's....(points at the faculty / protector)....I Know you guys are tired of this, but for us it's great to deal on this level"...(i)

(p) "We don't get tired of this"...(i)

(g3) "It's really nice to come in and talk a little theoretical nonsense for a few minutes....you don't exactly know what to say, but it's fun to say what you do say. Two issues, `man / with or over nature?', great....let's argue forever....and that's the fun thing about this ....excellent project."

The faculty / protector summarily discounts the bulk of his guests' comments, and I believe it is perceived by his guests as an insult. We chose this example because it indicates how alienating this protecting process can become for the other jurors, and also indicates why some guests enjoy the opportunity to attend and participate in juries. The protection here actually denies the value of guest juror commentary in a not so subtle way. Whereas a previous vignette discussed the potential harm of overly negative jury attitudes, this example declares the need for balance in juror comments between criticism and praise for the

student's efforts. The studio critic needs to accept this balance as well.

In an opposite form of this situation, we have observed jurors abandon their students at the first indication of trouble. We have labeled this, 'bailout'. It seems to occur more frequently in thesis juries where there may be more juror self-esteem at risk in the presence of colleagues and visiting VIP's. The teacher / juror may 'bail out' on his student when a majority of the jurors vigorously attack an 'obvious error'. The teacher / juror may feel embarrassed that he in fact suggested or promoted this 'mistake' to the student, or that he never noticed the problem in earlier preliminary juries. We have recorded final thesis juries where a student faced a spirited attack for a design action that we saw encouraged very positively during his preliminary juries, and even when several of the preliminary jurors are present in the final jury, they also choose to remain silent. If the student mentions that the criticized matter was supported by a preliminary jury, he appears to be making excuses, as explained in the section on differences in actor and observer perception. If the student remains silent, he learns the definition of 'catch-22'. Unfortunately, an overly judgmental atmosphere appears capable of becoming so threatening that it can even intimidate the jurors themselves. This sort of

situation certainly does not lend itself to trust-building between students and their teachers.<sup>176</sup> We have noticed that final and thesis juries have a higher incidence of protectionism, and that Asian-American students tend to receive more than average 'protects' in their juries, (please see Appendix I; juries for minority students).

**Variable Description:**

**IB:** measures the total number of times jurors would cooperatively build ideas, or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

**STALK:** measures the percentage of jury commentary made by the student presenter.

**EMOTE:** measures the students' own assessment of their highest level of anger experienced during their jury.

**JURYB:** measures the students' perception of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating them during their jury.

**JURYD:** measures the students' assessment of the effect of juror commentary on their self-esteem.

**ITOTAL:** the total number of interruptions of all jury participants (student and jurors).

**PROTECT:** measures the incidence of jurors speaking for the student

against another juror's criticism, even when this criticism is 'fair'.

#### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists a positive relationship between the incidence of protectionism (PROTECT), student anger (EMOTC), and the total number of intra-jury interruptions (ITOTAL).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between protectionism, student self-esteem (JURYD), and the percentage of student verbal participation in the jury (STALK).

\*\* that there exists an inverse association between protectionism, the incidence of juror idea building (IB), and the jury's ability to engage the student in the jury proceedings (JURYB).

#### **IV. JUROR-TO-JUROR COMMUNICATION:**

As previously suggested, jurors frequently come armed with hidden agendas. The jury can be seen by some jurors as a forum to propound a certain philosophical approach to design, or to respond to statements made by other jurors at other times. Jurors sometimes misuse juries by attempting to discourage divergent opinion. Flattery and showing-off to administrators or prominent visitors is another artifice that impairs achievement of educational goals, diverting the jury from a primary

purpose - to serve and educate the student.

What do jurors want and need from the jury experience?

- \* nourishment in the form of recognition, and respect from both students and peers, (a good grade).
- \* a fair hearing for their ideas and attitudes.
- \* an opportunity to educate.
- \* an opportunity to learn and expand their own thinking on design and education - to grow and change.

These goals seem, in most ways, compatible with those of the students.

### **Hidden Agendas & Idea Building:**

Old and unresolved hostilities among jurors can distort the meaning of certain comments, and arguments can occur without a harsh word ever being spoken. Unfortunately, the student is often a casualty of these 'quiet little wars'. The offending juror speaks to the other jurors through the student, or unduly criticizes another critic's students because their work reflects the unappreciated elements of said critic's design attitudes. We have often witnessed students being harshly criticized due to a 'turnabout is fair play' attitude, "In yesterday's juries you were unfair to



my students, so today ...." These agendas, premeditated or unconscious, invariably block communication. The juror listens neither to the student nor to other jurors' remarks because s/he has already planned a response. This expression of hostility can certainly be unjust, yet sadly enough occurs frequently in varying degrees of polite disguise. The result is obvious in the amount of energy diverted from the tasks at hand: to educate, learn, share, debate, listen, respect, etc. It is a selfish indulgence on the juror's part and a wasteful misuse of the jury's energy and expertise.

### "The Hidden Agenda"

The following incident occurred during the thesis jury of a very good project. The student presented his ideas quite fluently and concisely. The issue in focus here concerns the impact that the past histories / relationships of the participants can have on the tenor of intra-jury communication. As previously mentioned, the student and other jurors can often be caught unaware of the real motives behind certain juror behaviors. I know both `antagonists' in the following excerpt, and am aware of their failed business partnership, and the unresolved animosity surrounding their current relationship. Although their partnership failed years ago, they continue to take verbal `shots' at one another in even the most casual conversations. One is the studio teacher(t) of the student presenting, and the other is a guest juror(g) invited by the Dean, who I

think is unaware of the potential volatility of the pairing. As the jury proceeded, both of these individuals appeared increasingly anxious and potentially defensive. They were poised for the attack.... The guest fired the first volley in the form of three rapid and relatively critical interruptions of the student's presentation. They all focused on the 'elitist' nature of the student's dining room layouts for the restaurant portion of his design, and they all used a deprecating form of humor to communicate the real message. Although this message was meant for the teacher / juror, it most likely also passed through the bewildered student's psyche on its way to the intended target. Please note the role 'protectionism' plays in the following dialogue. In our judgement the criticisms were excessively negative and harsh....the guest then continued....

(g) "So only when you pay high freight you get the view (of the surrounding mountainous countryside), and if you're slurping hotdogs you get zip....(jury laughs, but the teacher is obviously disturbed as he grimaces and leans forward in his chair)....I guess one of the things I'm looking at here....annoys the hell out me in these things. Have you ever been in a high school cafeteria? ....I get that sense in there....it's like the K-Mart of food lines"....(i)

(s) "The director (the student's client for this project) wanted even less space"....(i)

(g) "It seems to me there's a better solution to eating than to process people in a kind of warehouse environment, and this whole thing of hierarchy of views is a little ....if this is such a good thing here"....(i)

(s) "ahh....!"....(i)

(g-speaking aggressively) "If you were up there skiing is that the way you

would like to eat?"

(s) "yes....eat quickly"...(i)

(g) "The only view you mention is down this way, and I see stairwells and" ....(i)

(t-voice raised) " Well, well I think (juror's name) that is not looking at the pictures he's got up there (points to the student's drawings). This is sort of God's country....anywhere you look is"....(i)

(g-to the student) "You have views everywhere?"

(s) "yes"....(i)

(t) "I mean.....I mean"....(i)

(g-angrily to the student) "Maybe your answer should have been, 'I have views everywhere' then when I asked you that question?"

(t-angrily to the guest) "Well, I mean I'm giving you the answer, and I'm also saying in defense of him (the student) that"....(i)

(g-angrily to the teacher) "Partly, partly I don't think it's a matter of defending him"....(i)

(t-angrily to guest) "Well no I...I, since I worked on it (the project) for sixteen weeks with him, I may remember something he may have forgotten in the heat of the situation.

(g) "OK, right"....(i)

(t) "But, it seems to me ahh, ahh....if you find a high school cafeteria that's broken up like that....with level changes and all"....(i)

(g) "There are level changes there?"

(s) "yes"

The jury adjourned soon afterward. In this situation the 'protect', although heavy-handed, seems to have defused the conflict somewhat. At the

end of this conflict voices were quite loud and the student was on the verge of tears. As the tension escalated, both antagonists seemed to be looking for a way out. The guest's discovery of the 360 degree views and the level changes allowed him a face-saving retreat. The student became a victim of a skirmish he didn't even understand, and I am relatively certain that he felt that an inadequate cafeteria design actually generated the juror's outrage. Instead of celebrating the graduation of a very good student with a very good project into the professional world, they used him as a foil for squabbling.

Perhaps intra-jury rivalries and the need for personal recognition cause some of the most severe problems in juror-to-juror communication.<sup>177</sup> By not listening sensitively to fellow jurors while 'out' searching for design weaknesses, and by responding to the subtle competitive urge often felt among jurors to be the first to uncover and point out 'profound' design deficiencies, the offending juror drains the discipline and cooperative energies of the jury. By not cooperating or building upon one another's remarks and ideas, the jury becomes a series of incoherent and negative criticisms passed on to a distracted, threatened student.

The concept suggested here is not only to allow a fair hearing for all juror

comments and ideas, but to build on each idea momentarily to see its potential for development more clearly.<sup>178</sup> The student should become an integral participant in this process that may eventually generate a series of ideas which may or may not be further explored. We are not suggesting jury-by-consensus. Perfect accord is not needed by either the jury or the student, and is probably counter-productive in the long run. As suggested by the Synectics Group, allow diversity of opinion to exist and learn from the differences, effectively demonstrating respect for one's peers and students.<sup>179</sup>

The need to convert others to our way of thinking seems almost instinctual at times, and can make it very difficult to evaluate projects developed in a manner, philosophy, or style not of our persuasion. Change in this behavior is difficult and time-consuming but certainly quite possible, and is the responsibility of every design educator. Idea-building and the sequence of events that is often associated with it will be discussed in detail in Chapter VI.

**Variable Description:**

**ITOTAL:** the total number of interruptions of all jury participants (student and jurors).

**JURYC:** measures the students' assessment of how effective their jury was as a source of useful design information.

**IB:** measures the total number of times when jurors cooperatively build ideas or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists a strong positive relationship between juror idea-building (IB), and the student's perception of the jury's usefulness as a source of design information (JURYC).

\*\* that there exists an inverse association between idea-building (IB) and the total number of interruptions in a jury (ITOTAL).

\*\* that there exists a positive relationship between sincere, non-rhetorical questioning (REAL), and juror idea-building.

### **Boredom:**

Boredom can affect both `juror-to-juror' dynamics and `student-to-juror' communication. Not surprisingly, jurors can bore both colleagues and students. When the discipline required to listen carefully to the remarks of fellow jurors wanes, repetition of comments, or tedious discussion of issues irrelevant to those currently under review can occur. This can both

divert and deplete the energy of the jury.

### "Mr. Hammam"

We have occasionally observed jurors who have developed predictable patterns in their choice of topics for discussion. Often, their focus is on functional detail, with the topics ranging from north arrow locations on the drawings to parking lot layouts. The students and other jurors can come to expect this line of questioning and critique from specific individuals. The behavior can become tedious, especially when it focuses on mundane detail.

I taught with one such individual for four years. He apparently had a fixation on bathroom layouts. It made little difference what year design students we were jurying, thesis or first year preliminaries, he knew he could safely comment on urinal spacing and wc stall door swings. The jury could be engrossed in philosophical debate concerning 'the meaning of life', and this individual would find a way to slip in a comment on the importance of isolating visual access to public lavatories. I believe he felt ill-at-ease discussing certain of the more esoteric subjects that juries can find themselves entertaining, and his line of commentary had a way of bringing the philosophical aspects of the dialogue to a crashing halt.

One year the senior thesis students organized themselves and purposely designed their lavatories with numerous obvious mistakes, i.e. entries off restaurant eating areas, two meter urinal spacing, undersized and oversized fixtures, etc. The juror was in heaven, he talked and talked about rest rooms until he saw the smiles on all of the jurors' faces, and then he laughed as well. He took the hint and eventually expanded his repertoire of criticism. Few students in that school couldn't design great public lavatories.

Juries are an opportunity for educating a much larger audience than just the student presenting. In many traditional jury formats, the largely,

uninvolved student audience goes completely unacknowledged. Perhaps we are missing the opportunity to involve them in the jury process more directly. Since the logistics of audience verbal participation in the jury might be questionable, it could be possible for them to be required to demonstrate graphically a fundamental understanding of each project and submit written evaluations of every project in post-jury discussions. There may be an opportunity to engage the student audience in the idea-building process as well. Each member of the audience could then make post-jury presentations of their ideas to every other student who participated in the jury; collaborative design on all levels.

**Variable Description:**

**JURYB:** measures the students' perception of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating them during the jury.

**JURYC:** measures the students' assessment of how effective their jury was as a source of useful design information.

**IB:** measures the number of times when jurors cooperatively build ideas or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

**ITOTAL:** the total number of interruptions of all jury participants (student



and jurors).

### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists a positive relationship between students' assessment of how successful a jury was in engaging and stimulating them and the incidence of juror idea-building.

\*\* that there exists a positive relationship between students' assessment of how successful a jury was in engaging and stimulating them and their assessment of the jury's usefulness as a source of design information.

### **Listening & Interruptions:**

As discussed earlier, one of the key issues in juror-to-juror communication seems to involve effective listening. Attorneys listen for weaknesses, contradictions, inconsistencies and errors; should this also be the exclusive purpose of jurors in architecture? Jurors are not merely gathering data, but should also be listening for cues to the authentic feelings and attitudes of the students and the other jurors. Often, half of the battle is to understand exactly what is being communicated, and the other half is convincing the speaker that it is acceptable to explore and make mistakes without loss of respect. At times listeners will nod their heads and feign agreement with the speaker just to gain the floor, and

express their real sentiments, or to introduce a new idea.

In our protocol studies, it is saddening to see how often ideas are dismissed because others haven't the discipline to forgo interrupting and blurting out every idea that pops into their heads. If these interruptions are seen to consistently gain the perpetrators the floor, the entire jury environment will become polluted with an 'every man for himself' attitude, and the jury's capacity to educate will dissipate. It is our experience that most interruptions emotionally hurt those who have been interrupted, and that in certain cases feelings of vindictiveness result, this in turn contributing to a breakdown in the general cooperative and respectful atmosphere most juries do or should seek to encourage. We have counted as many as sixty-one interruptions in one jury; nineteen interruptions of the student by jurors, seven interruptions of jurors by the student, sixteen interruptions of female jurors by male jurors, eight interruptions of male jurors by other male jurors, and twelve interruptions of male jurors by female jurors.<sup>180</sup> Unfortunately these clusters of interruptions appear to be common with some jurors and in some schools. The inclination to interrupt appears to be a communications habit, which characterizes individuals as well as groups.<sup>181</sup> At times, it is almost as if schools have become accustomed

to interruptions and no longer notice their negative effect on students and jurors.

Jurors are in a position to become role models for their students. When a student is interrupted nineteen times and then watches his teachers interrupt one another forty-two times, s/he and the entire student audience must begin to doubt the value of the jury process. In these situations, the jury becomes merely a device for jurors to gain a public hearing at the students' expense. Our post-jury student interviews indicate that after witnessing only one or two of these disrespectful incidents, students can become self-conscious and defensive, and lose motivation.

**Variable Description:**

**JURYA:** measures the students' perception of the jury's willingness to listen to their presentation and comments during the jury.

**JURYB:** measures the students' perception of the jury's success in engaging and stimulating them during the jury.

**JURYD:** measures the students' assessment of the effect of juror commentary on their self-esteem.

**EMOTC:** measures the students' assessment of their level of post-jury

motivation to engage in subsequent design activity.

**EMOTE:** measures the students' assessment of their highest level of anger experienced in the jury.

**REAL:** the total number of real (non-functional) questions asked of the student presenter by the jurors during one jury.

**ISP:** the number of times the jurors interrupt the initial student verbal presentation.

**ITS:** the number of times the jurors interrupt the student to gain the floor; this figure includes the number of ISP's.

**ITOTAL:** the total number of interruptions of all jury participants (student and jurors).

**IB:** the total number of times jurors cooperatively build ideas or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

**STALK:** the percentage of jury commentary made by the student presenter.

### **Hypotheses Generated:**

**\*\*** that positive associations exist among: the student's assessment of the jury's willingness to listen (JURYA), the percentage of total jury commentary made by the student (STALK), and the number of real questions and incidence of juror idea-building (IB).

\*\* that a positive association exists between the total number of interruptions in a jury (ITOTAL) and interruptions to the student presentation (ISP). And, that inverse associations exist between (ITOTAL) and both: the student's assessment of the jury's willingness to listen (JURYA), and student post-jury motivation levels (EMOTC).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between the number of juror interruptions of the student, and the student's assessment of the impact of juror remarks on his or her self-esteem (JURYD).

#### **Prejudice:**

We have observed in interruption-congested juries that even though they averaged sixty percent more male than female jurors (FEMTOT), male interruptions of female jurors (MF) occurred thirty percent more often than male interruptions of male jurors (MM). In the few juries with equal male-female membership (5), or in which females predominated (9), these frequencies were reversed, (please see Appendix I). Dominance of one gender in the jury may be associated with discrimination of the minority gender in frequency of interruptions. Research suggests that the ideas and comments of female members in male-dominated groups regularly fail to receive the attention they deserve.<sup>182</sup> It is our experience that this may be the case in design juries as well, in that female jurors

are consistently interrupted more. In two of the three schools we observed there were **no** female jurors at all, and this remarkable disparity in membership occurred throughout fifty-two juries. Although female juror membership (FEMTOT), averaged approximately forty percent in School 1, female jurors received significantly less 'talking time' (participation time) relative to their numbers than did their male counterparts (FDESERVE). As mentioned, they were interrupted more frequently, and the duration of their comments was quite a bit less than the male jurors received (FDURAT) (MDURAT) (DURATIO). Female jurors tended to speak after the male jurors had spoken, and they also tended to speak in clusters, one female juror after another as though they grew more 'confident' in numbers. Female jurors would often sit together along the usual arc and slightly further back from the student presenter than the male jurors. Of course we also observed some spectacular exceptions to these observations, ranging from extremely aggressive and outspoken female jurors to absolutely passive male jurors.

In regard to possible racial prejudice in juror-to-juror communications, we observed only one racial minority juror in over one hundred and twelve juries studied. This was a Hispanic-American male guest juror. Racial minorities were under represented in the juries of all three schools

in our study. We can become so accustomed to prejudicial practices that they become virtually invisible to many majority participants. As a design educator and juror for fifteen years, I never really noticed the inequities in female juror participation rates and interruptions, although we all realized that minority racial representation for both students and jurors was far from equitable. As I began to film and analyze these juries and interview female jurors, I was amazed by how much I had previously missed, and also by how much discrimination minorities and women were experiencing every day of their lives.

#### **Variable Description:**

FEMJ: number of female jurors.

MALEJ: number of male jurors.

FEMTOT: percentage of female-to-total jury membership.

IMF: number of interruptions of female by male jurors.

IFM: number of interruptions of male by female jurors.

IMM: number of interruptions of male by male jurors.

IFF: number of interruptions of female by female jurors.

FDURAT: average duration of female juror statements.

MDURAT: average duration of male juror statements.

DURATIO: ratio of female duration to male duration.

**FDESERVE:** ratio of speaking time occupied by females to their proportional representation on the jury.

**Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that male jury membership averages at least fifty percent or more of total membership.

\*\* that male interruptions of female jurors (MF), occur much more frequently than male interruptions of male jurors, (MM).

\*\* that in juries having a minority of males, female interruptions of male jurors (FM), will be more frequent than female interruptions of female jurors (FF).

\*\* that duration of female juror comments will average less than the duration of male juror comments.

\*\* that relative to their membership numbers (FEMTOT), female jurors make less than their share of total juror comments (FDESERVE).

**Leadership:**

The following discusses the need for effective leadership in juries. Research in group behavior and management has stressed the role of leadership in enhancing the productivity of task oriented groups.<sup>183</sup> Our observations indicate that effective leadership can also play an important



role in juries. Although effective leadership and its potential to facilitate the jury process are discussed at length in Chapter VIII, the following is a brief description of elements of juries that can go wrong in the absence of effective leadership:

\*\* In juries the role of leader is often either undesignated or is assigned by default. This lack of definition can lead to confusion and competition for the leadership role. Synectics Inc. has found that a great deal of energy can be diverted into these activities from the group's intended goals. They have also observed that in any meeting without a firmly designated leader, two or three individuals tend to vie for the leadership role, with the most forceful usually winning temporary leadership, but subject to continuous challenges. Such behavior, unless it can be moderated by some intervening constructive force, would likely discourage sensitive listening, increase interruptions, and generally encourage a rather disrespectful and selfish atmosphere.

\*\* Facilitating a jury's movement toward productive goals is a learned skill requiring initial insight into the need for effective listening, practice, patience, and more practice.<sup>184</sup> Unskilled leaders can misuse their position to promote their own ideas and agendas, denying other

participants a fair hearing. Often they politely mask their verbal manipulations, although their motives are readily evident to most parties involved. Their manipulations in turn lead to a reduction in their credibility. Their insincerities are most often perceived by other jurors as attempts to win converts, and as challenges to their own ideas and beliefs. Generally such maneuvering can become an unconscious habit, difficult to alter without appropriate feedback.<sup>185</sup>

\*\* We have often observed irresponsible or confusing juror comments remain unsubstantiated and unexplained. We have also observed a phenomenon we term 'power vocabulary', which arises when a juror feels pressure to contribute, but doesn't really have much to say. S/he then disguises this aimlessness in long, convoluted commentary, inaccessible vocabulary, and, at times, circular reasoning. Faculty interviews and personal experience both suggest that while the juror rambles on incoherently and repetitively, the other jurors and students may wonder if the message has gone over their heads. Our interviews and video tapes show that after a while they appear to give up trying to understand, and their attention begins to wander; perhaps it moves on to thinking of what they want say next rather than what is currently being said. This type of behavior can occur in almost any a jury, but appears

more frequently in the 'pressurized' environment of thesis juries. Certain individuals seem to employ this tactic repeatedly. The following excerpt occurred during a preliminary jury for an advanced thesis studio.

(Note: Guest juror comments are keyed as (g), and students as (s))

### "Power Vocabulary"

Previous juror comments had covered a range of topics. The following juror commentary occurs toward the end of the jury, and seems to focus on the student's choice to derive form for his U.S. embassy design in Peking, from a Chinese ideogram....

"I think there are a couple of paradoxes presented by this project....one is that if one buys the approach that the appropriation of the figure which I think is not an insignificant fact of the project....and one not to be departed from too soon, once one has done that I think that you have yet to realize quite how constraining this should be upon you, and whether or not you've reconciled the desire for the creation of heterogeneous form with the desire to create an alphabet city, or something that is basically characteristic of an attitude on your part of...of an urbanism which is based upon the use or employment of the strategy of the chinese character. The second thing is

"....(i).

(s) "I want to come back to"....(i)

(g) "I still would like to question....I say question, not criticize you because I'm not truly sure whether the program and the demands placed upon the diagram by the program are necessarily as easily contiguous or synonymous with this character....ahhh....caricature (audience laughs). Well we've gone from character to caricature. But the reasons I have suspicions, but not necessarily of that foundation, is that I see in two particular cases (stands and points at the model) here and here, an ability to work even within the given vocabulary that you've created to reconcile the apparent desire for the connection that I...I would guess is probably coming from the program itself, and I somehow believe that...that if those buildings were to have a desired ability to speak for themselves, they probably would suggest that they be closer together,

or that there be a certain degree of proximity whose pressure coming from that character is creating a good deal of tension now between its ability to operate effectively and your ability to satisfy certain of the parameters which that sets up. So I think basically that is the second paradox, the first one I would like to go back to is the fact that while I have no problems necessarily with the creation of heterogeneous form, in fact I myself am quite partial to that, I actually think that whether or not that and to what degree that may have something to do with what this demands...ahhh...I really think you need to question further, because I think that the very 'spatiality' of that and what that suggests seems to me in some ways is negated by the virtue of your reverting to something which is so deliberately confounding amongst the various different pieces that you've created."

The jurors and the student were all caught by surprise when the juror actually finished and leaned back in his chair. They all appeared to be a million miles away. Many had been staring blankly at their feet while others absent-mindedly played with their hair as they stared at the ceiling and walls. The student had no idea if an answer was expected of him or not, and nervously began a confused response that finally focused itself on a functionally-oriented 'verbal tour' of his plan.

\*\* By default, many juries allow various versions of 'Robert's Rules' to actually become the virtual leader of the proceedings. As the Synectics group has pointed out, these rules of group behavior are designed to keep order and to allow conflicting views to be stated and defended;

they are not designed to encourage either creative group ideation, or an atmosphere conducive to open and free speculation. Synectics research has again demonstrated that time after time 'Roberts Rules' pressure the outcome of group achievement toward mediocrity. Their use can allow leadership to be careless with the ideas and feelings of the others. This, in turn, can set up a milieu of contagious disrespect where each juror begins to see the proceedings as a contest where if someone wins - someone else loses.<sup>186</sup>

\*\* Carelessness with the ideas of others can also lead to unformed / undeveloped ideas being prematurely dismissed as 'impossible' or 'crazy'. The jury often expects complete and tightly developed ideas to be presented cleanly, (which is especially unrealistic in preliminary reviews). Good ideas which arrive in undeveloped form, do not receive the attention they deserve. More superficial or conventional ideas and concepts then become the jury's focus; ones that are quickly completed, easy to comprehend, and easy to defend.<sup>187</sup>

\*\* We have examined forty-two juries where the leadership position was held by a female juror (FEMLEAD). And, we believe that female leadership can ameliorate certain inequities regarding female

participation. We have observed a dramatic increase in female verbal participation (FDESERVE) in juries with female leaders. Female membership (FEMTOT) is also significantly higher in juries with female leadership. Unstructured interviews suggest that female jury leaders may work harder at recruiting female guest jurors. Given that we have consistently observed male dominance and several forms of sexual bias in previous jury proceedings, i.e. percentage of time talking (FDESERVE), duration of commentary (FDURAT), jury membership percentages (FEMTOT), incidence of jury leadership during thesis and final juries, and overall incidence of jury leadership (FEMLEAD), we imagined that female-led juries might manifest a more respectful attitude and constitute a more productive environment, one with fewer interruptions, more cooperative idea-building, fewer rhetorical and more real questions, and a higher percentage of student talking time. This was not the case. We saw little evidence that female leadership was more sensitive to common inequities of the jury system, (please see Appendix I; data on juries with female leadership). Surprisingly, although female membership (FEMTOT) was only ten percent greater than average with female jury leadership (.46 with female leadership vs. .41 overall), there was a very large increase in the female to male interruption rate (FM). Similar increases in female interruptions of male jurors occur when the

jury leadership is female, even when the jury is mainly male. Under female leadership (FEMLEAD), there is also a greater frequency of interruptions to the student presentations (ISP), cross-juror interruptions (ITOTAL) (MF)(MM)(FF), and rhetorical questions (RHET) per minute of jury time, a decrease in the frequency of juror idea building (IB), and real questioning (REAL) per minute of jury time, and a decrease in the percentage of student verbal participation in the juries (STALK). These observations were as surprising as their potential for controversy is apparent. The findings will be discussed more fully as we statistically analyze the results in Chapter VI.

In our opinion effective leadership could ameliorate many of the communicative problems in juries, i.e. hesitant and anxious student presentations, ill-prepared guest jurors, unfair juror criticism, lack of juror accountability for irresponsible remarks, juror boredom and impatience, issue focus, interruptions, racial and sexual prejudice, defensiveness, hostility, open conflict, and hidden agendas. We believe that through sublimation of personal agendas, awareness of common problems in the jury process, active participation in clarifying, summarizing, questioning, and encouraging a fair hearing for all ideas, leadership can alleviate these communication problems. The means to do so will be

discussed in detail in Chapter VIII.

**Variable Description:**

**ITOTAL:** the total number of interruptions of all jury participants (student and jurors).

**ISP:** the number of times the jurors interrupt the initial student verbal presentation.

**ITS:** the number of times the jurors interrupt the student to gain the floor; this figure includes the number of ISP's.

**IMF:** the number of interruptions of female by male jurors.

**IFM:** the number of interruptions of male by female jurors.

**IMM:** the number of interruptions of male by male jurors.

**IFF:** the number of interruptions of female by female jurors.

**REAL:** measures the number of real (non-functional) questions asked of the student presenter by the jurors.

**RHET:** measures the number of rhetorical questions asked of the student presenter by the jurors.

**IB:** measures the number of times jurors cooperatively build ideas or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

**STALK:** measures the percentage of jury commentary made by the



student presenter.

FEMTOT: the percentage of female to total jury membership.

FEMLEAD: gender of the jury leader.

FDURAT: average duration of female juror statements throughout the jury.

MDURAT: average duration of male juror statements.

DURATIO: ratio of female duration to male duration.

FDESERVE: ratio of speaking time occupied by females to their proportional representation on the jury.

#### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists a strong positive relationship between female jury leadership and 1) the amount of verbal participation by female jurors; 2) the duration of female juror comments; and 3) the percentage of total membership that is female.

\*\* that there exists a positive association between female jury leadership and female interruptions of male jurors (FM), interruptions of the student presentations (ISP), total number of interruptions (ITOTAL), and number of rhetorical questions asked of the student (rhet).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between female jury leadership and the incidence of juror idea building (IB), the number of

real questions asked of the student (REAL), and the percentage of student verbal participation in the jury (STALK).

### Group Think:

Juries can develop certain undesirable group behaviors and attitudes over time. Familiarity can help in short-cutting a lot of polite 'getting to know you' type behavior. Familiarity with one another's strengths and attitudes can be quite useful where jurors respect each other's expertise and interest, enabling them to build upon each other's ideas, and better educate the students.<sup>188</sup>

On the other hand, 'group attitude' can cause problems for both jury and students, particularly when jurors have worked together over a long period of time. The jury can begin to develop an illusion of unanimity. Through subtle self-censorship they begin to assume that all jurors truly approve of the procedures used, ideas discussed, design approaches taught, curriculum decisions implemented, etc. As described in Irving Janis' *Group Think*, this self-censorship can be quite powerful, hinging direct pressure to bear upon any 'deviant' thought.<sup>189</sup> Over time, group feelings of invulnerability and morality can develop. The result is formulaic thinking and rationalization, which impedes creative thought

and behavior. These problems are rarer where self-expression is encouraged, where mutual respect among all members allows ideas a fair hearing, and where sensitive listening and effective leadership are the norm.

We believe that this group think syndrome peripherally relates to our discussion of issue focus in juror-to-student communication. During most 'issue-focus' situations, there is very little divergence of opinion.<sup>190</sup> Few new and original ideas are considered and developed, and jurors seem to reinforce one another's opinions by making essentially the same comments in slightly different ways.

**Variable description:**

**ISSUEF:** indicates if a jury has discussed fewer than three major issues.

**JURYA:** measures the students' perception of the jury's willingness to listen to their presentation and comments.

**JURYC:** measures the students' assessment of how effective their jury was as a source of useful design information.

**IB:** measures the number of times jurors cooperatively build ideas or generate alternatives relevant to the original design intentions of the student.

### **Hypotheses Generated:**

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between issue focus (ISSUEF), and 1) juror idea-building (IB); and 2) the student's assessment of the jury as a source of useful design information (JURYC).

\*\* that there exists a strong positive association between idea-building (IB) and the student's assessment of the jury as a source of useful design information (JURYC).

\*\* that there exists an inverse relationship between issue focus (ISSUEF) and the student's assessment of the jury's willingness to listen (JURYA).

The resolution of these deleterious behaviors involves just a few basic concepts with which we are all familiar: respect for others, ability to listen to and understand others' attitudes and feelings, and sensitive and effective leadership. As educators, we hesitate to acknowledge that we neglect these concepts in dealing with students and colleagues. Unfortunately, extensive research, (including our own), indicates that these principles of common decency are often neglected in group environments to the detriment of our students and our institutions. The power of these principles to produce creative thought and behavior, and

to diminish counter-productive habits is profound. There is also a tendency to underestimate this material, in that listening and respect are assumed to be 'just common sense'. It is difficult to perceive oneself as disrespectful, or as consistently careless with the feelings and ideas of others. Unfortunately, both our own research findings and teaching experiences support the contention that irresponsible behavior can be and often is habitual and virtually unconscious, requiring time, patience and devotion to rectify. Ways to ameliorate these problems will be discussed at length in Chapter VIII. The statistical testing of the hypotheses generated in this chapter will follow in Chapter VI.