Sociological Imagination – Have students clear off their desks and listen to the story. Ask students to visualize the story as you read, picturing the events as if the story is a movie or TV show in their heads. After reading the story in its entirety, follow up with the debriefing questions.

FAMILY BOMB SCENARIO

Teaching the Sociological Imagination through Culture and Norms

Have students participate in the Toe to Toe Demonstration (see attached)

You will need 6 participants (3 male and 3 female) and a class set of Venn diagrams.

Supporting Visuals –

Seinfeld “Close Talker” Clip - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGVSlkEi3mM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGVSlkEi3mM)

Personal Space Commercial - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecDH5uqsKLA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecDH5uqsKLA)

Play the commercial about the differences in personal space expectations. How does this align with our conclusion that norms are NOT scientific but socially created? (If they were scientific, their definitions would be the same...) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhlzGrlqAko](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhlzGrlqAko)

Cultural Norms and Behavior

Have students write a script for the No Norms Norman / No Norms Norma assignment. Offer extra credit for students who perform the scripts for the class. (See Attached.)

You may wish to play an episode of Debby Downer as an example of a person who has no sense of social norms.

[Bing video about Debby Downer](http://www.bing.com/videos/watch/video/saturday-night-live-debbie-downer-thanksgiving-dinner/26717f0b59d9f4759a4426717f0b59d9f4759a44-4745626497253992?q=debbie%2bdowner%2bvideo)

Bargna Simulation


It is very difficult to understand what a person arriving in a new culture experiences. Faced with a whole new cultural reality, certain things may not be understood or may seem inappropriate, shocking or even insulting...

Barnga is a simulation game that can help address some of these questions. Each group involved in the game starts with a different set of instructions. Because the simulation places them in a situation that is awkward and frustrating, participants are forced to resolve communication problems with people who don’t share their understanding of the rules of the game.

[Bing video about Cultural Discontinuity](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcEfqHB08QE)
FAMILY TERROR STORY

A mother struggles in through the front door of the house after a hard day at work. She is overloaded with her purse, the mail, the newspaper and 2 bags of groceries. Her teenage son, his feet propped up on the coffee table, is so absorbed in the T.V. show that he is watching that he doesn't even hear his mother come in. luckily, the father, also on his way in from work, drops his briefcase and catches one of the grocery bags before it slips completely from his wife’s grip and falls to the floor. Their 2 daughters are listening to music and doing homework in their bedroom.

Suddenly, without warning, a loud piercing sound comes from the television and warning sirens go off in the neighborhood. A popular news announcer comes on the T.V. screen and interrupts the program. He appears terrified and has trouble speaking. He announces to the nation that the country is under nuclear attack. Incoming missiles will hit in 7 minutes.

The mother screams, drops everything and bursts into tears. The father quickly gets the daughters from the bedroom and the son drops to his knees in disbelief. The children are panic stricken and look to their parents for support, hoping the announcement is false. The family, now in complete terror, crouches down for cover and hold on to each other while the father leads them in prayer. Five minutes later, nuclear missiles that were fired from a secret Air Force base below the Rocky Mountains in Colorado hit their targets and instantly wipe out this family along with the entire population of the city of Baghdad. More strikes soon follow on the rest of Iraq.
TOE TO TOE DEMONSTRATION

1) Ask for 6 volunteers - 3 male and 3 female. Have them stand shoulder to shoulder. I usually pair the male/female first, trying to match the male and female student who are closest in height. I then pair 2 males together and the remaining females together.

2) Pass out the Venn diagram. Ask students to observe the behaviors the students will be asked to carry out. They should be looking for behaviors, attitudes, emotions, body posture, etc.

3) Now, ask the students to face their partners. Then ask them to stand so that their feet are parallel and the tops of their toes are touching the tops of their partner's toes. Then, tell them not to move their feet until told to do otherwise.

4) I usually observe a lot of things – a lack of eye contact, poor posture to create space, giggling, etc. It is interesting to compare the actions of the differently paired students. Ask students to return to shoulder to shoulder when you notice students seem to be finished writing their observations into the Venn diagram.

5) Ask the observing students to predict on the back of the sheet how their demonstrating classmates will say they felt when carrying out the experiment. Then, ask the demonstrating students how they felt - see if any students in their seats used the exact same words.

6) Request that the two male partners face each other again. Tell them to not touch toes this time, but to stand as close as they would to talk to a good friend. Not too close - not too far. Now, ask those students to reach their arms out..... Every single time I have done this experiment, the male students have stood almost exactly one arm's length apart - precisely what is believed to be polite personal space in the United States....

7) Have a class discussion sharing what they have observed, comparing and contrasting the pairs. Ask why they feel those similarities or differences existed. What is the bigger learning about breaking norms? What does this behavior tell us about our culture?

8) Play the Seinfeld Clip "Close Talker". Have students observe how Jerry, Elaine, and Jerry's parents respond to the close talker. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGVSIEi3mM] as well as this commercial [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecDH5ugskLA]

Were there any similarities or differences from what they observed with their classmates? I am sure the students will laugh (and there is a laugh track). Why is this humorous?

9) Play the commercial about the differences in personal space expectations. How does this align with our conclusion that norms are NOT scientific but socially created? (If they were scientific, their definitions would be the same...) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhIZGrIqAk0]
NCSS 2013
Sociology Symposium
Session 3
Hayley Lotspeich’s “Teaching the Sociological Imagination”
In sociology, a norm, or social norm, is a pattern of behavior expected within a particular society in a given situation. The shared belief of what is normal and acceptable shapes and enforces the actions of people in a society; norms often explain people’s behaviors. Those who do not follow their social norms are considered eccentric or even deviant; sometimes they face sanctions or more serious punishments. Norms with significant moral importance to the society are called mores. Violations of mores are usually punished with serious sanctions and are often backed by law.

In social situations, norms are unwritten and often unstated rules that influence individuals' behavior. Norms are most obvious when they are not followed or are broken. People who violate norms often make those who follow them nervous, anxious and/or uncomfortable.

Join a group of at least 3 students with at least one male and one female student in your group. Write your script and be ready to perform...... The skit should include stage directions. Make sure each person in your group has a part. Here is an example:

Molly: (loudly) Good Morning, Mrs. Lotspeich.

Teacher: (acting excited) Good Morning, Molly. We are going to learn some exciting things today!

Molly: (laughs rudely) You aren't going to try to tell us your bad jokes, are you? Maybe more stories about your weird kids?

Teacher: (hurt) No. We are going to delve into anomie/strain theory.

Molly: (sarcastically) Great. That sounds real exciting.

You may choose one of the following titles for your skit......

No Norms Norman

No Norms Norma

Some examples of norms you may want to include (or not!)......

Eating off your date’s plate
Being rude to the wait staff
Talking about your ex....
PART ONE
Several years ago, Annette Sorensen, 30, an actress from Copenhagen, Denmark, and Exavier Wardlaw, 49, a movie production assistant from Brooklyn, NY, were arrested for leaving their 14-month-old daughter outside a Manhattan restaurant on a chilly day, while they ate inside the restaurant. They left her in her baby carriage on the sidewalk. Many passersby called 911 to alert the police. New York authorities took the child away from her parents and temporarily placed her in foster care.

PART TWO
In an ensuing article in the New York Times, one Danish commentator observed that leaving a baby outside of a restaurant is a very common practice in Denmark. The commentator wrote, “Often, Danish parents....leave their babies outside. For one thing, Danish baby carriages are enormous. Babies ride high above the world on horse-carriage-size wheels. It’s hard to get such a carriage in a café....Besides, Danish cafes are very smoky places.” The commentator continued, “In Denmark, people have an almost religious conviction that fresh air, preferably cold air, is good for children. All Danish babies nap outside, even in freezing weather—tucked warmly under their plump goose-down comforters....In Denmark all children own a sort of polar survival suit that they wear from October to April, and they go out every day, even in winter.”
Barnga: A Simulation Game on Cultural Clashes

By Raja Thiagarajan

Available on Amazon.com for under $30

http://www.amazon.com/Barnga-Simulation-Cultural-Clashes-
Anniversary/dp/1931930309/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1380558208&sr=8-4&keywords=bargna

“Help your employees understand what unites them together and what makes them unique! BARNGA is the classic simulation game on cultural clashes. Participants experience the shock of realizing that despite their good intentions and the many similarities among them, people interpret things differently from one another in profound ways, especially people from differing cultures. Players learn that they must understand and reconcile these differences if they want to function effectively in a cross-cultural group”
Barna Debriefing

After discussing what happened in the Barna simulation – discuss the implications of the events of the simulation…. You can use this opportunity to introduce some key vocabulary (ethnocentrism – did you assume they did not understand or were cheating if the new player does not play by your rules?; cultural relativism – you understood that the new person was playing by different rules, thus allowed them to break the rules of your game; and cultural discontinuity – once you became aware of the differences in rules, did you not know how to bridge the differences?)

Now, you can share the Danish Baby Carriage Story (see attached) followed by Danish baby carriage slideshow. Before sharing the story, ask students to give you some “bad celebrity moms” and put their names on the board. Ask why these moms are “bad.” Hopefully you will get some baseline characteristics of behaviors of a “good mother” – sober, involved, protective, don’t endanger, etc. Now read the Danish Baby Carriage story…. Stop after the first portion of the story... Is this actress a good mom or not? Why or why not? (This will be the ethnocentric response.) Then read the editor’s response…. Now, do the students think she’s a bad mom? Why or why not? (This will be the cultural relativist response). OK – So how do we bridge the differences? Should be keep it illegal to leave your baby unsupervised on the streets of Manhattan – unless you’re Danish? (Cultural Discontinuity)