

Session 4: Teamwork

Summary

1. Students will improve their ability to listen and cooperate with scene partners to tell a story together.
2. Learning Outcomes:
 - a. Students will communicate locations through actions and dialogue.
 - b. Students will communicate objects and locations nonverbally.
 - c. Students will develop their memories, referencing elements previously established on stage.
3. Time Allotment: 2 hours

Materials & Resources

Notes:

- a. Materials & Quantities:
 - a. Bell, horn, or other noisemaker (optional) - Ending scenes, interrupting scenes to provide input (dinging). Clapping also works well.
 - b. This is an active class. Dress in comfortable, loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes. Bring water. Secure hair. If done indoors, move chairs to the sides/back of the room so there is sufficient space for all students to stand in a wide circle and also move around.
- b. Resources/Links:
 - a. This session includes games from previous sessions, as everyone improves with practice. See the Master Game List in the Drive folder for more detailed explanations.

Session Procedure

1. Warm-Up [13-15 minutes]

- a. Goal: Warm-up. Get into the improv mindset. Think creatively.
- b. Zip Zap Zop [5 minutes]
 - i. Goal: Build energy. Build connection within the team. Practice making spontaneous choices.
- c. Vocal Warm-Ups [5 minutes]
 - i. Goal: Teach students some exercises to warm-up their vocal chords. Just as we stretch before a sports match, we should stretch our vocal chords before big performances.
 - ii. Note: You may substitute your favorite vocal warm-ups. Here are mine:
 - iii. Either watch this video ahead of class and teach these warm-ups or show the video and practice with students.
https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_how_to_speak_so_that_people_want_to_listen#t-459701 (Link should begin at 7:38 and end around 8:46)
 - 1. Arms up, big sigh
 - 2. Lip exercises
 - 3. Siren (Wee-aww)
 - iv. The tongue exercises in this video are not only great fun, but they also really help you to articulate better. The full video is excellent as well.
<https://youtu.be/8sQoYa8TptI?t=121> (Starting at 2:01, ending at 3:22)
- d. Location Walk [3-5 minutes]

2. Homework Review & Introduction [10 minutes]

- a. Each student will silently present a location that they've practiced as homework. The other students will guess the location. Lead a discussion about how students could guess the location. (i.e. What did she mime? A stethoscope. Giving an injection in someone's arm. Where does that happen? A doctor's office.)
- b. Briefly introduce today's topic: teamwork.

3. Yes, and [5-10 minutes]

- a. Goal: Practice agreement.

4. Denial Game [10 minutes]

- a. Goal: Learn the importance of agreeing with your partner.
- b. DENIAL GAME

Pairs

This is the opposite of Yes, and. Players try to build a scene by denying their scene partner's last line.

A: "Thank you for these brownies."

B: "What? That's a cat. Be careful, he's angry!"
A: "No she's not, she's happy, and she's a turtle."

These scenes are generally short (3-6 lines). It's to demonstrate how difficult it is to build a scene when you deny your scene partner. Allow two students to demo in front of everyone, then give everyone a few minutes to practice with a partner. Finally, come back together as a group and discuss.

5. Three-Line Scenes [20-25 minutes]
 - a. Goal: Practice listening to your scene partner. Build a cohesive story together.
 - b. Discuss after each scene.
6. Break [10-15 minutes, starting around the 65-70-minute mark]
7. Group Freeze [3-5 minutes]
 - a. Goal: Warm-up. Get into the group mindset. Practice paying attention to scene partners.
 - b. GROUP FREEZE

Everyone plays

The players begin by walking at a normal pace around the room. Someone stops. As others notice, they also stop. Once everyone has stopped, everyone starts moving again, but faster. Repeat 3 times.

Discuss (1-2 minutes): What did you think? Was it hard? (Praise students for observing quickly.)

Teacher's note: Be sure it is not the same student starting the freeze each round. If one person is leading, it is not the group but an individual leading a group. Our goal is to think and move as a group together.

8. One Sentence at a Time [5-10 minutes]
 - a. Goal: Practice agreeing with scene partners and group storytelling. Practice building a cohesive story. Warm-up for the next performance game.
9. Beads on a String [10 minutes]
 - a. Goal: Practice a performance game. Practice building a story as a group.
 - b. BEADS ON A STRING

Everyone plays. Pick 1 student to start and 1 student to end.

Input: First line, last line

Students should line up against a wall with some space between them. Choose 2 weaker/shy students as the starting and ending beads. Give them starting and ending lines that are completely unrelated. (e.g. “Once upon a time, there was a princess who lived in a castle.” “The aliens will never return again.”) These two students will step forward to form a new line far in front of the old line. There should be plenty of space between them for all other students to step forward into the new line, Bead 1 says their line, then Last Bead says their line.

A student should step forward and join the new line. They should choose their position based on where their line should be in the story. For example, “The princess had never seen a spaceship before” would go in the first half of the line, whereas “The aliens hate cookies” should go in the second half. Bead 1 speaks, New Bead(s) speak(s) in order, then Last Bead speaks. This repeats until all students have joined the new line and told a coherent story.

Take 1-3 minutes afterwards for discussion.

Easy: The teacher can choose who steps forward each time. Encourage them to go to random places in the line, not just step forward. Or point where you’d like them to go in the line.

- c. Play twice.
- 10. Emotional Mime [15-25 minutes]
 - a. Goal: Practice listening and responding to a scene partner. Practice object work.
 - b. EMOTIONAL MIME [4-7 minutes per pair: 2-3 minutes per scene + 2-4 minutes feedback]

2 Players (Speaker and Mime)

Input: Repetitive activity

Select a repetitive activity that does not require talking, such as playing a video game or folding laundry. Assign this to the Mime. The Mime begins the scene by performing this task. The Speaker begins a one-sided conversation with this person. The Mime cannot respond with dialogue, only body language while performing the task. End the scene after the players have gone through 3-5 emotions.

I recommend demonstrating this game to the class with yourself as the Speaker, giving clear directions to encourage clear reactions from your scene partner. For example:

Mime [Folding laundry]

Speaker: "Sis, thanks for doing my laundry. You're a great big sister. I really appreciate it."

Mime: [Big smile, looking at the Speaker and nodding]

Speaker: "Yeah, I'm going to go hang out with my friends."

Mime: [Furrowed brow, tight lips, big folding movements]

Speaker: "Lisa's dog died and she really needs cheering up."

Mime: [Big eyes, frown, sigh, slow folding of laundry]

Discussion: After each scene, discuss as a class what went well and could go better. Ask the performers questions like, "How did you expect the Mime to react?" Or "How did that statement make you feel?"

- c. Try to allow each student to be a speaker and mime.
- 11. Wrap-Up [2-5 minutes]
 - a. What did you learn today?
 - b. HOMEWORK: Do your vocal exercises at home.
 - c. If chairs, etc were moved to create an acting space, ask students to move everything back.

Post-session Instructions

- a. Check out your kids from the roster in your app.
- b. Report any issues or questions to our staff.
- c. Make any notes to yourself about what to review or follow up with for the next session.

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Games Repeated from Previous Classes

ZIP ZAP ZOP [5-7 minutes]

#beginner #any level #warm up #team building #group mindset #improv1 #improv2

Everyone plays

Stand in a circle. The idea is to pass an energy ball from person to person by clapping and saying, in order, "zip," "zap," "zop." Start by going around the circle. The teacher will turn to the student to the left, make eye contact, say "zip" and clap, passing the energy to them. This student will turn to the next person to their left, make eye contact, say "zap" and clap, passing it on. The next does the same, saying "zop." It then repeats: "zip" - "zap" - "zop." When it returns to the teacher, it can be passed in any direction to any person in the circle (again by clapping and saying the appropriate word in order). Go at a slow/reasonable pace until everyone is getting it. Then, add outs (see below). Increase the speed until only two players remain. Continue increasing the speed. Eventually one will be out, or the teacher can declare a tie if appropriate.

Outs: You are out if you say anything other than the word expected (i.e. "zop" is the expected word, but you said "zip" or "zoop"). You are out if you mishear something (i.e. Person A is passing it to Person B, but Person C responds. Person C is out). You are out if it's passed to you but you don't notice.

Easy mode: People who are out leave the circle. (Begin here for the first day.)

Intermediate: People who are out stay in the circle but are silent. (When easy mode is getting easier, introduce this.)

Hard: People who are out can move freely and speak to disrupt the remaining players. (This is an option if you have an exceptionally strong group, but I do not expect it to be used in the majority of beginner classes.)

YES AND [5-15 minutes, longer if switching partners and repeating]

#beginner #team building #warm up #listening #younger #improv1 #improv2

Everyone in pairs (If you have an odd number of students, have the group of 3 go in a ring)

Input: Object cards

Students will practice agreeing with their scene partner and building a universe together. The younger student will draw an object card and make a statement about the object drawn. (They draw the card "hair brush." They say, "I have a purple hair brush.")

Their partner continues the conversation, starting with "Yes, and." ("Yes, and it is a beautiful hairbrush.")

It's okay if they go off-topic. They just need to agree with each other and not contradict their partner. Go for about a minute then switch partners. (If pairs are initially assembled in a line or ring, this is easier). Demonstrate this with a willing student after explaining.

THREE-LINE SCENES [1 minute per pair per round, likely 10-30 minutes with group discussion / feedback after each scene]

#beginner #any level #performance #team building #object work #listening #character work
#opener #closer #improv1 #improv2

Everyone (split into two lines on opposite sides of the performance space)

Input: Object

We're going to make 3-line scenes. Person A will speak, then Person B, then Person A, then everyone will clap.

Ask the first person in each line to step forward onto the "stage." Choose Line A to be the line that starts. The person from Line A will start the scene. Give the students their input. (i.e. "Hamburger") The Line A person will say a line, then the Line B person will say a line, then the Line A person will respond, then everyone will clap. (A (**mimes eating a hamburger**): "This is delicious. Thank you." B: "You're welcome. I would do anything for my dearest son." A: "Mom, I love you." (*Everyone claps*)) The players switch lines (Person A will go to the back of line B; Person B will go to the back of line A), and the next people in each line take over. To be clear and consistent, Line A always starts. Provide a new input for the new pair. (You can use the object cards or come up with your own ideas.)

If the students start to get comfortable, stop providing inputs and let it get free-form.

Intermediate: Line A starts verbally, Line B starts with object and/or scene work.

ONE SENTENCE AT A TIME [5-10 minutes]

#beginner #any level #listening #team building #creativity #younger #storytelling #improv1
#improv2

Everyone plays

Input: Location

Sit in a circle. Ask the class for a location. Go around the circle, each person telling the story one sentence at a time. If it's going well, point at different students to randomize who goes next. Encourage students to go as quickly as possible while creating a cohesive story, without creating anxiety for shy students.

Discuss afterwards the coherence of the story, focusing on who did that particularly well. ("Fatimah, I liked how you referenced the frog that Samesh introduced earlier in the story.")