

“TALES OF WONDER”

Director Dana White

The Gluck Improv Troupe - Classroom Online Resource Document (CORD)

INTRODUCTION

“Tales of Wonder” is a theatrical show that blends improv theatre and fairy tale story telling to create a production that instills the importance of learning in school to children. The production uses the structure of a fairytale motif and blends the tools and games of improv comedy. This online resource highlights some of the games and exercises that were used to build the show. These games and exercises can be used at the teacher’s discretion to help open students up to the word of theatre and improv.

***Teachers must take the students through the warm ups and exercises carefully and use their professional judgement as to which games are appropriate for which groups of children.

WARM UP

Warm ups are an essential part of an actor’s preparation. Below is a series of warmups designed to get actors ready to perform. These warm ups can be done with students to create focus and energy in the classroom.

Stretch out

Students stand in a circle. The teacher instructs them through a gentle stretching series.

- They reach up, hands over head to touch the sky
- Roll down and touch the floor, dropping the head.
- Gently roll back up and reach side to side.
- Gently** roll head around in circle.

* This exercise opens the body up preparing it for the rest of the exercises.

Body Shake

In this warm up, we go thru a series of shaking out different appendages in this order. Students go through a series of shaking one arm at a time, one leg at a time, little butt shake and then jump in place .

- shake each arm(8 x's)each leg(8 x's)butt shake(8 x's)
jump in place(8 x's)
- shake each arm(4 x's)each leg(4 x's)butt shake(4 x's)
jump in place(4 x's)
- shake each arm(2 x's)each leg(2 x's)butt shake(2 x's)
jump in place(2 x's)
- shake each arm(1 x's)each leg(1 x's)butt shake(1 x's)
jump in place(1 x's)

* This warm up helps students get their energy up and warm up their connection between their bodies and their minds.

EXERCISES

Mime Exercise

Mime exercises are a useful tool for building focus and concentration.

- Students get into pairs.
- Each student stands facing the other.
- They stand in starting position with both hands up.
- They make eye contact.
- Teacher chooses a "Leader".
- The "Leader" begins to move slowly and the other student must follow their movements.

* Mime exercises are a building block in theatre for a more focused and disciplined actor. Mime is an important tool in teaching connection with your fellow actor, concentration and an understanding of your surroundings.

Circle Clap

Students get into a large circle. One person in the circle picks another person in circle and claps at them. That person picks another person out and claps at them. This continues around the circle until the teacher decides to stop it.

*This warm up is to get people to pay attention to each other and to learn to react fast. These are critical attributes in theatre.

Machine Build

In this exercise, students will build an imaginary machine. You start with one student in the center of the room who begins a motion like a machine. Each student enters and adds a part to the machine. Once they have this, you can add a sound effect to every motion as well.

* This exercise helps to create a communal spirit and teaches students the importance of working together in a creative environment.

*****Teachers must be responsible for overseeing that students are making physical motions that are safe to themselves and to the other students around them. Do not allow students to make motions that they cannot do for a period of time or ones that cause any physical pain.

Story Time

Get everyone in a circle.
Each student will say one sentence that tells a story.
Best to begin by saying "Once upon a time there was a"
The sentences will build to a story.

*This exercise is a building block for all improv. It opens the creative ideas of the actor and teaches them how to think fast and cooperate in the creative process. "Story Time" encourages students to think of the first thing that comes to mind while building confidence in their own creative ideas and thoughts.

Story Conductor

This game is great for building group cohesion and building listening skills. It can be done with larger groups, but groups of 5 or 6 work best. The group stands in a line on stage, and one other student is selected to be the “conductor.” A suggestion for anything can be asked of the class, possibly an object, an activity, or something they are learning in class you want to review in a fun way. The conductor points to any person in the group who must begin telling a story around that suggestion, and whenever they feel like it, the conductor can point to another person who must continue the story exactly (to the word if possible) where the first person left off. The conductor can switch it up as often or as swiftly as they want. It ends when the group naturally gets to “the end” or the teacher stops it.

The Question Game

This game can be useful for teaching students about the power of questions and how they can often communicate just as much as statements. Students line up and the first two students begin speaking to each other ONLY in questions. If one student can't come up with a question, or mistakenly says a statement, they are “out” and go to the back of the line. Conceivably, one student could potentially stay up front asking questions and knocking out all the other students. The trick to this one is to keep the questions focused on one topic or situation. Have the students decide on the topic for the conversation.

The Alphabet Game

This game may seem simple, but even adults have trouble remembering their alphabet when in the heat of the moment. This game builds listening skills and creativity, while also reinforcing the alphabet itself. Starting with the suggestion of an activity and any letter of the alphabet, two students must create a “scene” where the first word of each line they speak (and only one line) begins with

each consecutive letter of the alphabet. The fun is in the challenge of remembering the alphabet and dealing with more difficult letters like K, Q, and X, while still sticking to the story of the activity.

Animal Characters

Students choose an animal to play. Teachers encourage students to embody an animal physically and vocally. The students can do this in groups of 6 or 7. They can interact as the animals. This exercise helps students to open themselves up physically and to find confidence in their own bodies and creative choices.