

Classroom Online Resource Document (CORD) prepared by Clark Barclay

Optional materials: Costumes and props of any kind. These will be at the student's disposal to use during the improv activities.

Space requirement: Large enough space for free movement (cleared classroom, MPR, gym, etc.)

LAUGH & LEARN!

Improv activities for grades 4-12

Improv acting helps:

- Develop communication skills
- Learn creative problem solving

It's fun to THINK ON YOUR FEET!

THE 3 RULES: R.E.F.

RESPECT

ENCOURAGE

FUN

SYNOPSIS:

In this improv workshop, student will participate in an array of on-your-feet activities focused on self-expression, imagination, and classroom unity.

Kinetic activities such as improv theatre shake up the often-sedentary aspect of schooling and allow students to momentarily disconnect from their routine. Students will gain self-confidence from learning new skills and discovering their talents. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to break down borders within the classroom and strengthen as a team. Afterward, these activities will leave a lasting impression; individually and collectively.

RESULTS:

- Develop communication skills
- Learn creative problem solving
- Learn supportive team-work abilities
- Learn improv acting techniques and activities
- Develop/practice mindfulness

This workshop consists of warm-ups, four improv exercises, and a warm-down.

LESSON OUTLINE:

1. *WARM-UPS*
 - *Ice breakers, stretches, relaxation and focus, face and body exploration...*
 2. *ACTIVITIES*
 - *The Questions Game, The Alphabet Game, Story Conductor, Late For School*
 3. *WARM-DOWN*
 - *Regrouping, relaxation, reflection, group praise*
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WARM-UP

- STRETCH (touch toes, power poses, inverse stretches, etc.)
- SHAKE IT OUT, LIP FLUTTERING
- SHAKE YOUR PARTNER'S HAND
- RELAXATION EXERCISE(S)
- VOCAL EXERCISE(S): RESONATORS, DYNAMICS, DICTION, TIMBRE, TONGUE TWISTERS (E.g. TOY BOAT, RED LEATHER YELLOW LEATHER, etc.)
- FACE WARM-UPS: big, small, happy, sad, pouty, mad, silly, BIG, small (adjust for age group)
- ALEXANDER POSE (OPTIONAL: PARTNER ADJUSTMENT)

A QUICK ICE BREAKER GAME:

E.g. Kitty in the corner, assassin, zip zap zop, slow motion rumble

THE QUESTION GAME

A hilarious and competitive activity. A good icebreaker.

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, which the next student to hop up to the front is charged with starting.

THE ALPHABET GAME

Builds listening skills and creativity. Requires concentration.

This game may seem simple, but even adults have trouble remembering their alphabet in the heat of the moment. 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.

STORY CONDUCTOR

This game is great for building group cohesion and strengthening listening skills.

Groups of 5 or 6 work best. The group stands in a line on stage, and one student is selected to be the “conductor.” A suggestion for anything can be asked of the class— an object, an activity, or something they are learning in class that 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.

LATE FOR SCHOOL

Gain skills in non-verbal communication

This is basically a structured game of charades. One person acts as the “teacher” who is making a late student give an excuse as to why they were late. A suggestion can be asked of the class as to what they were doing, but the “late student” can’t know what it is. Starting with one other student acting as the helper, the helper acts out with their body what that activity is. If the late student guesses, they can join the class and help out with acting out the next suggestion given by the class. If they are having trouble, the “teacher” can help out by giving verbal clues. This process can repeat as many times as desired. Or the suggestions can get more complicated, building from what they were doing, to what and where they were doing it, to what, where, and with whom.

WARM-DOWN

1. A RELAXATION EXERCISE (breathing, meditation, stretching, etc.)
2. FEEDBACK
3. A ROUND OF APPLAUSE