"Excellent Explorations"

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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 judgment as to which games are appropriate for which groups of children.

Warm ups

Warm ups are an essential part of an actor's preparation. Below is a series of Warm ups designed to get actors ready to perform. These warm ups can be done with the 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.
- Standing up, twist the body gently from side to side
- Roll the arms forwards and backwards
- lean back (gently), then touching the toes, alternating slowly and gently
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.

Vocal Warm ups

The voice is an important tool for actors. This exercise warms up the vocal cords and gets air moving in the lungs.
- In a circle, the students say the sound of each letter four times in a row.
- Go through the entire alphabet.
- Consonants and vowels can also be done separately.

Tongue Twisters

These exercises get the tongue working and focus the actors on pronunciation. The leader says each line of the tongue twister, followed by the rest of the group. For an additional challenge, pick up the pace!

Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear.
Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair.
Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't very fuzzy, was he?

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Betty Botter bought some butter
But she said the butter's bitter
If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter
But a bit of better butter will make my batter better
So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood
As a woodchuck would, if a woodchuck could chuck wood.

Improv Exercises

Improv exercises are a wonderful way to warm up the imagination and get the students working together to create something unique.

Mime

This is an excellent exercises for building focus and concentration.

-Students get into pairs with students standing and facing each other.
-They stand in starting position with both hands up.
-They make eye contact.
-Teacher chooses a "Leader".
-The "Leader" moves 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. This starts 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. Ideally, the parts of the machine depend and interact with each other.

* 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 of a story. It is 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 five or six 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 is groups of six or seven. 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.

Thank You

Students pair up. Each pair has a conversation, but the first words of every sentence must be 'Thank you'. This highlights that idea that in improv everything the other person offers is a gift and you should appreciate it. This creates an environment that welcomes contributions and lets the students become bolder in their ideas and take bigger risks.