



8STORIES

FOR CREATIVITY

GUIDE TO IMPROVISATION TECHNIQUES AS A BASIS FOR CREATIVITY



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INTRODUCTION

During the project teachers worked on a DRAMATIC IMPROVISATION TECHNIQUES, with the aim of familiarizing students with interpretation. The teachers told the story chosen and adapted to their region because of its special relevance and its support of social values, and the students in IMPROVISED AND SPONTANEOUS WAYS represented and interpreted what the adult tells. In this way, "the game of theatre and interpretation" is initiated, while preparing the students for the development of the work they have to create and interpret through the workshops.

From the improvised story itself, teachers established proposals in which the students participated and developed in a context of challenge and adventure, with the aim of overcoming challenges in which the students can feel identified by emulating their characters. The innovative Key aspects of work were basically founded in the relation and cross-sectional knowledge of school education teachers that belong to different cultures and countries.



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It is easy to use, intuitive, dramatically improve collaborative relationships, it can be integrated very easily in the classroom, it does not require any additional preparation and can be used by any teacher or specialist. We can advance a few key impacts inside the classroom as a consequence of the participation in these workshops:

1 Members of the team will feel strong and secure as they pursue the same goal.

Students will understand that the problem/ activity that they have to resolve is a common target. **2**

3 Students will be aware of the fact that success or fail will depend on the team and not on just one person.

Every single person that is part of the team will have to bring solutions. **4**

We increased cooperative learning and used of a variety of strategies (particularly the improvisation theatre technique) that allowed us to obtain a higher motivation and attention level on the part of all our students. Inside these cooperatives teams we can find a distribution of responsibilities that will always have to be equal and fair to obtain the best performance of the stories.






We avoided a strict and rigorous interpretation and we look for naturalness and interpretative freshness.

The teacher tells each passage of history and the students improvise their performance.

This is the mechanism by which young people are initiated into the world of culture and creativity through theatre. With this technique, they will perfect their acting skills. It will conclude with the staging of the chosen work in front of the whole student body, adapted to the reality and problems of that country or region. This will cause the educational objective pursued to raise the awareness of students, teachers, and families. While enjoying the show, they will visualize these problems of social exclusion and early school leaving. It will serve to fight this social scourge that is so damaging to our European society.

We will work on the project to facilitate the teacher's work in the sense of giving him/her the tools to develop the talent, creativity and ability to obtain from each story the values and the most common problematic situations in their social environments.





The intervention proposal is presented as a series of workshops which will allow students explore different forms of improvisation theatre expression.

Improvisational theatre, often called improvisation or improv, is the form of theatre, often comedy, in which most or all of what is performed is unplanned or unscripted: created spontaneously by the performers. In its purest form, the dialogue, action, story, and characters are created collaboratively by the players as the improvisation unfolds in present time, without use of an already prepared, written script. This practice, known as applied improvisation will be used in classrooms as an educational tool as a way to develop communication skills, creative problem solving, and supportive teamwork abilities that are used by improvisational, ensemble players.

The workshops are distributed as follows:

- 2.1. Workshop for the development of visual expression.
- 2.2. Workshop for the development of verbal expression.
- 2.3. Workshop for the development of body expression: express emotions through the body.

The workshops help putting together a guide for Improvisational Techniques under 3 headings: visual, verbal and body expressions.



1. Visual expression

1.1. Little – More – Most



There are three chairs on the stage. Three participants are selected. Participants have to act out the same task, but raising the emotional temperature of the act. The host of the game names what needs must be played:

- You have a toothache;
- You sleep and wake up after having a nightmare, you are scared;
- You say: "I don't want to go to school";
- You have a temperature and feel very sick;
- You are happy that you won the lottery. Exclaim: "I won a million";
- Be happy. You tell everyone "You have no idea how much I love you";
- Etc.

Players can be swapped every few situations played.

TIPS for improvisation:

- Learn to change the strength of your emotions
- Be focused
- Control your attention.



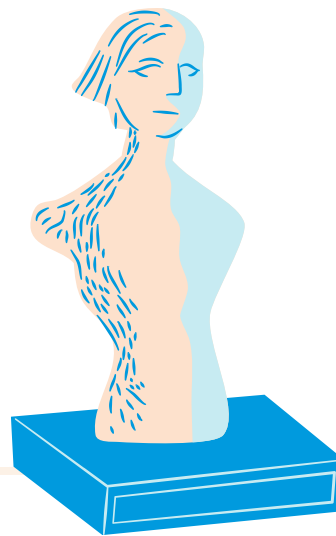
Visual expression

1.2. Living sculpture and sculptors

The leader of the exercise announces the topic of the sculpture. It can be positive or negative. One actor goes on stage and creates a live picture based on the given theme. 5-7 people are invited to create the sculpture. When the sculpture is created, the sculptors are invited one by one. They wordlessly change the movements of the actors standing in the sculpture so that the sculpture turns from positive to negative and vice versa.

Themes for sculptures:

- The queen is angry;
- Alice shrinks;
- March Hare is in a hurry;
- Cheshire Cat Jokes;
- The Jack of Hearts lies;



TIPS for improvisation:

- **Your body can express a lot.**
- **Don't be ashamed of it, be relaxed, expressive and plastic.**



Visual expression

1.3. Color, gait, emotion

Participants walk around the space. The leader of the exercise names the color and the emotion. The participants start walking looking at each other and trying to feel and act out the emotion. Do not touch another person. Participants in the exercise must memorize all the colors and emotions.

In the second part of the exercise, the instructor says only the color. If something goes wrong, you are removed from the game. The last 3 remaining participants in the exercise win.

Emotions and colors:

- Anger - red
- Fear - black
- Sadness - blue
- Joy - yellow
- Amazing - blue
- Disgust - green



TIPS for improvisation: When playing different emotions, try to control your attention, feel the emotions being played. Don't laugh, don't smile if you pretend to be sad or scared.



Visual expression

1.4. Discussion - Think Pair Share

What do you value in a friendship?

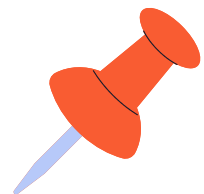
Discussion on what friendship means, students work on their own and then in pairs, to share their ideas. (Think, Pair, Share Strategy).

Each pair of students then writes/draws 2 values on coloured card.

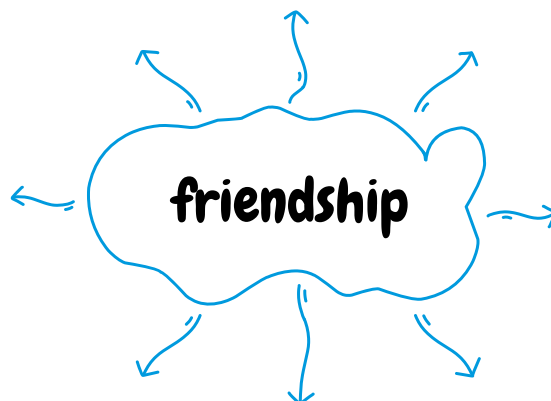


They can decorate the cards to match their chosen values.

The students then pin their completed cards to a board.



The teacher summarises these ideas in a visual mind map and the class reflects on the values of friendship.



Visual expression

1.5. Diamond 9 Strategy

Based on the values discussed, the students will get into groups and rank the values from high to low - 1 being the most important value and the least important is 10. (Diamond 9 Strategy)

Quality	Rating	Reason
Rich		
Kind		
Generous		
Fun-Loving		
Intelligent		
Similar Interests		
Good-looking		
Loyal		
Friends in common		
Have a positive outlook		



Visual expression

They can read a list of qualities given by the teacher, rate them and give a reason as to why this quality is important - 10 qualities in total.

In groups of 4, students will discuss the rankings and agree on a group ranking 1 - 9, this means they must drop 1.

They will then answer these questions:

1. The quality that my group agrees is most important in the friendship is because...
2. The quality we had difficulty agreeing on was....because....
3. My idea of what's important in a friendship changed during this activity because.....
4. Something I learned about myself as a result of this activity is....

1.6. Collage

Starting points:

- Appreciating ourselves and respecting differences in others
- What has influenced students that has shaped them to be the people they are today

On an A4 sheet of paper students will make a collage - using symbols, drawings, words and pictures to show the range of influences that have contributed to making them the person they are today.

Prompts and suggestions include - personality, hobbies and interests, culture and how your family and friendships might have influenced you.

Students are then invited to share their collage and discuss how similar and different influences have shaped them and other people in the group.

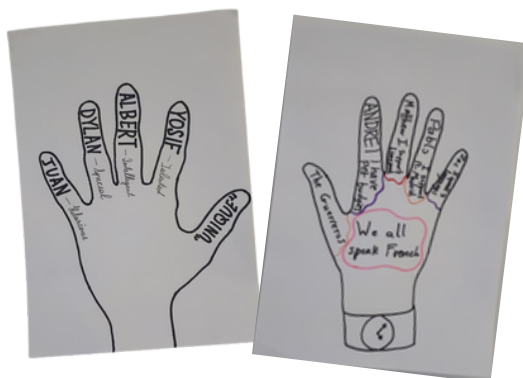


Visual expression

1.7. The Hand of Friendship

Students work in groups of 4.

Trace a hand on a sheet of paper.



Each person writes their name on one finger and one thing that is unique to them.

In the palm of the hand, the group must write what they all have in common.

On the thumb, write the name of the group.

Groups can decorate their hand - use colour, symbols, etc.

Display hands when groups are finished.

Make two lists on the board.

The first list should be the unique things about everyone and the second list should be the things they have in common



Visual expression

1.8. Pointed Star Activity



On each point of the star write one thing that happens in your home and community to make people feel that they belong.

Examples could include - eating/playing together, volunteering, involved in community activities etc.

On each point of the star write one thing that happens in your school to make people feel that they belong.

Examples might be - involved in sports, school activities and programmes etc Discuss what you have written with your classmates and share.



Visual expression

1.9. DIY Characters



Students design their own character for a common puppet play. They can do it individually or in pairs. The personality of their character must be expressed through their physical appearance. They must explain their character-Puppet in front of the group and will change little details with the feedback and suggestions provided by their classmates. They can get inspiration from real characters, but they must be original and have to include the values assigned to them by the group.



1.10. Colour me! (when you feel it)

Students are given a picture related to a story. The facilitator reads the story at loud (music can be added, too). Students close their eyes when listening to it. When the facilitator finishes, the students must colour their picture in order to express their feelings. They can comment on it in small groups and compare their colours and feelings.



Visual expression

1.11. Human Sculptures

In pairs. One student is the artist and the other one is the sculpture. The artist has to build up a character who expresses the feeling suggested by the facilitator, by moving the parts of the body of the sculpture. They are given 5 minutes for it. Then, one by one, artists have to guess the feeling that each sculpture shows and write it down on a piece of paper. They will be read at loud and students will explain what made them think so. They can shift roles and repeat the activity.

1.12. On stage

In groups of 3-4. Students are given magazines, photos and some clothes. They have to design and set a scenario using those materials for an imaginary play. Their collage will be exhibited and they will have to explain it to their colleagues. Changes will be made according to the feedback and suggestions from their classmates.



Visual expression

1.13. Mirroring

This exercise consists of two players facing each other and trying to imitate each other's movements. This exercise is excellent for developing observation skills and the ability to emulate the movements and expressions of another actor.

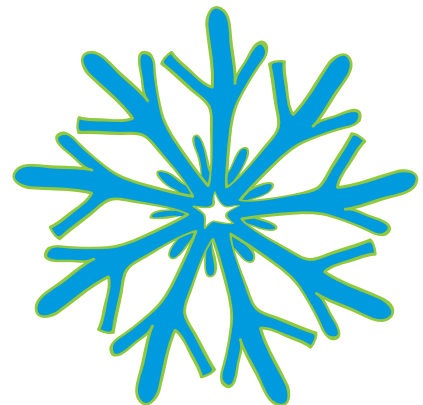
1.14. Charades



In this exercise, one player chooses a phrase, word or action and acts it out physically without speaking. The other players try to guess what he/she is acting out. This exercise is excellent for developing the ability to communicate through body language.

1.15. Frozen images

In this exercise, one group of players creates an improvised scene and then freezes in one position. Another player then chooses an image and enters the scene, adding a new dimension to the story. This exercise is excellent for developing the ability to create vivid images and express emotions through posture and body position.



Visual expression

1.16. Mime techniques

Mime technique is based on visual expression and the ability to tell a story without speaking. Players can practice a variety of mime techniques, from tightrope walking to interacting with imaginary objects. This exercise is excellent for developing the ability to communicate through body expression and precision in movement.



1.17. Switching emotions



In this exercise, one player begins by acting out a specific emotion, and another player enters the scene and changes that emotion to a completely different one. This exercise is excellent for developing the ability to quickly switch from one emotion to another and express the emotion through facial expression and body language.



Visual expression

1.18. A puzzle of signs

After choosing a colour, each child will be invited in turn to go to the centre, where a white sheet is placed, to leave a mark (line, symbol, name), to which the next companion's sign should be connected and so on, up to creating a great puzzle of representative signs, a graphic level of the entire group.

The activity aims to encourage cooperation and respect the work done by others, "adapting" your own. The children paid attention to the work of the child who was drawing to understand where his sign ended and where it was necessary to start with a new sign; they had to activate their creativity so as not to repeat the same signs and the same colours and had to wait their turn, thus exercising respect.



Visual expression

1.19. I draw the emotion

Each child is given a paper sheet with pencil colours available. The aim of the activity is to combine drawing and emotions, giving free space to self-expression and one's sensations without the fear of making a mistake or failing in some way. Each drawing represents an emotion (joy, sadness, calm, etc.). At the end of the activity, the children exchanged opinions on what they felt, the difficulties or fun experienced, mutual influences, and what they liked. The activity allows you to express a state of mind through visual expression.



Visual expression

1.20. The Ant



The aim of this game is to complete the drawing of an ant's body before the other players. Each player has paper and pencil at his disposal and, in turn, trying to complete the drawing of his own ant by rolling the die. The number of dots on the die represent a different body part:

1 = body

2 = head

3 = antennae

4 = eye,

5 = mouth

6 = leg

It starts with a player who rolls the dice twice: in one of these two times he must roll a 1 or a 2 in order to start drawing the ant. If he does not get these numbers he passes the die to the next player and, once his turn is back, he repeats the operation. When he has drawn the body or head, then he rolls once per turn and any type of number is fine to complete the drawing. Whoever finishes the ant first wins. The aim of the activity is to sharpen one's patience (to wait one's turn to roll the dice and continue with one's drawing) but also to develop dexterity in drawing.



Visual expression

1.20. The fabric

A popular saying says that "hai la stoffa!" that means "you have all the makings to do something" to indicate that you are particularly capable of doing something. The facilitator gives the children scraps of fabric, markers, glue, papers and each of them has to make their own creation by writing on the pieces of fabric what their talents are. The purpose of the activity is not only to stimulate creativity, but above all to think, reason and recognize one's own talents, the first step in order to then know how to use them.



Visual expression

1.21. Which animal are you?

The facilitator lists 3 characteristics that a single animal has in common (patient, docile, aggressive, generous, stubborn, sleepy head, etc.) and in total describes about 10 animals. Based on the characteristics that the children hear, they have to draw the animal they think best represents them. Drawing helps children organize ideas and improves their perception of their surroundings, which also promotes a better sense of observation.



2. Verbal expression

2.1. Take the ball - thank you

A ball is used for the exercise. Two persons are elected. Let's imagine that they recently had a conflict with each other. The first participant wants the second to take the ball. It's like trying to apologize. He can only say the words "Get the ball". The second participant takes the ball, but returns it back saying "Thank you", as if not wanting to forgive.

The goal of the first participant is to try as many different means as possible, voice intonations, emotions, so that the second participant takes the ball and accepts the apology. The goal of the second participant is to accept the apology, but not immediately.

TIPS for improvisation:

- Name one main goal for going on stage.
- Try to achieve your goal using different means, emotions, actions.

2.2. Subtext - change the meaning of the words

Participants learn a quatrain from the tale of Alice:

Will you dance or won't you dance
Will you dance or won't you?
Will you dance or won't you dance? – Asked the snail pike
I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Although they were mine before.



Verbal expression

In life, words have meaning, but the way you say them can have a completely different meaning. We call this the "TEXT" of the text.

After learning the four lines, one participant is invited to complete the task. You have to say the poem using different circumstances:

- You are in love;
- You have committed a crime and are very sorry;
- You are angry and scolding;
- You want to say a very important message;
- You are scared and ask everyone to hide and save themselves;
- You invite the crowd to rise up against the evil king;
- You sing a lullaby to your child.
- You are trying to entice to commit a crime.
- Etc.

The participant of the exercise must repeat the words of the poem until the leader of the exercise says "STOP".

TIPS for improvisation:

The word "REMEMBER" is written in a bold, white, stylized font with a blue outline. It is set against a blue, pill-shaped background with a white border.

Remember that sometimes words can have a different meaning. It all depends on the context with which you say them. Use it when improvising and acting.



Verbal expression

2.3. Improvisation. Speak in turn

4 participants are selected. They choose a character from a fairy tale. The audience suggests the place where the action takes place. The setting may be completely unrelated to the tale.



For **EXAMPLE** :

Uninhabited island; Planet Mars; Magic Garden; Computer games room etc.

The audience suggests the circumstances, what just happened? For example: Shipwrecked; Saw an asteroid falling in the sky; A great storm had just broken; There is a big sale of the year, etc.

Participants have to decide who will be first, second, third and fourth. In improvisation and acting, actors can only speak according to their number.

First the first participant says the sentence, then the second, only then the third and fourth. You can only speak when it's your turn, but you have to remember to act on stage all the time. Action cannot be interrupted.

TIPS for improvisation:

- Hear and follow what other actors are saying.
- Learn to logically develop dialogue.



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Verbal expression

2.4. Guess who?

A student is the leader and the other ones are their followers. The leader chooses a character and their colleagues must guess who it is by asking yes-no questions. The first one finding out the character will lead the next round.



Reflection: Very easy and fun. The only challenge was that it had to be in English.

2.2. Re-building the story

Groups of 3. Students are given some pictures (between 4 and 10, depending on the level) and they have to build a story. They have to tell and perform the story for their colleagues, using the images when telling it. All images must be used when making up the story. It can be a real story or a tale. It can have rhyme, too.

2.5. Impro piece. Act out

In pairs or groups of 3. Each student is given a character with an aim and they have to discuss and negotiate with their partners. All members are given some information about the circumstances (example: it is a police office/ it is a house estates...), but not all the details their teammate has. They need to use persuasive techniques to achieve their goal.



Verbal expression

2.4. Which mask are you wearing now? / Mask on-mask off

Students will tell a story. Depending on the mask they are given by the facilitator, they will tell it using a specific intonation. Example: The anger mask will make them shout or yell when telling the story. The facilitator can change the student's mask as many times as they consider, depending on the level of difficulty or the maturity of the group.



Verbal expression

2.5. Associated words

This exercise is excellent for stimulating your creativity and your ability to think quickly. In it, one player starts by saying a word, and the next player must say a word associated with the previous one. For example, if the first player says "dog", the second player might say "bone", and the third player might say "buried". Continue the chain until everyone has had a chance to contribute.



2.6. Inspired monologue

In this exercise, a player is given a random word or phrase and has to improvise a monologue inspired by it for a set amount of time. This technique is excellent for developing the ability to speak spontaneously and keep the flow of conversation going.



Verbal expression



2.7. Crazy Interviews

This exercise involves two players, one of whom plays a famous or fictional character, while the other is an interviewer. The interviewer must ask absurd or inappropriate questions, and the character must answer them as seriously as possible.

This exercise is excellent for developing the ability to maintain composure and respond to unexpected situations.

2.8. Tag game

In this game, two players face each other, and each must tag the other with a characteristic. They then have to improvise a scene in which they embody these characteristics. For example, if one player labels the other as "dumb", they will have to improvise a scene in which the labelled player acts like a dumb person. This exercise is excellent for developing the skill of creating characters and maintaining consistency in their performance.



Verbal expression

2.9. Reading the story 'TYPES' by Cristina Bellemo

A picture book which, through Luce, the child protagonist, has opened up numerous possibilities for interpreting human types and for extraordinary cataloguing. Reading some passages from the book encouraged the discovery of each of these types of people living in the protagonist's apartment block, reasoning out the stereotypical ideas one might have. Through this activity, each child had the opportunity, in turn, to tell 'what type it is', introduce themselves to the other children, tell each other and work on seeing each type as different from the other and accepting it.



Verbal expression

2.10. The symbol game

It is based on the distance that often exists within an individual between the image he/she has of himself/herself and the image he presents of himself/herself to others. This game allows everyone to become aware of this difference when it exists. Each participant chooses a symbol with which he/she identifies (a lion, a ladder, a warrior, etc.), and then draws a symbol for each of the other participants, depending on how he/she perceives his/her own personality. Finally, the participants explain the reasons for their choices. Each participant can become aware of his/her own image of himself that he/she offers to others.



Verbal expression

2.11. The type of word

After having told in a circle (in one of the activities already described) what kind of person they are, the child has to pronounce a 'type of word' in turn. Each child is given a Post-it on which they have to write a comment, a word that expresses the mood after the workshop. This activity serves to do metacognition, to reason about one's perspective and to learn to speak it first verbally (in a circle, in front of one's peers) and then in writing on the Post-it. It also trains children to listen to the opinions and feelings of others, relating to differences. The activity includes a verbal patchwork of adjectives and a colourful post-it note board with comments.



Verbal expression

2.12. A skein of stories

The children arrange themselves in a circle, and after listening to the names and presentations of all the children present, they have to unwind the skein by passing it in turn. To do this, the first child who will choose whom to pass the skein begins by repeating the child's name and what type it is but holding one end of the thread in his hand. This will create a weave of wool threads, and each child will be able to memorize the stories and types of children participating in the activity. The aim is to become aware of who we are and those around us, understanding that everyone's stories and lives are naturally intertwined, which is positive. Unrolling the skein is also a way to reflect on what has been learned in the laboratory.



Verbal expression

2.13. Animal Farm

All players are seated in a circle. Each participant is given a folded card on which the name of an animal is drawn or written. Everyone reads their card without showing it to the other participants in the game. When everyone has their own ticket at an agreed signal, the game begins: all the participants, at the same time, stand up and move around the circle, each one making the animal's call marked on the ticket that was given to them; they try to identify all the others belonging to their "animal" family (recognition occurs only through the emission of the animal's cry). The members of the same family, arm in arm, once they have ascertained that the family is complete, they go and sit down. When all the families have formed and calm has returned to the farm, the families introduce themselves one at a time, walking around inside the circle and emitting their characteristic cries. The purpose of the game is to create cohesion among the children belonging to the single family of animals, helping them to understand cooperation and teamwork for a common goal which is to describe the family of animals to which they belong in a few words.



Verbal expression

2.14. Transformation

It's an improvisational game. Everyone walks in space. When the leader claps his hands, everyone freezes. Whoever has an idea launches it, and the others must follow without hesitation. At one point the conductor claps his hands again and everyone becomes motionless again, until another launches a new idea.



For example, one says: Hello guys, today we're going to question..." All the others understand that it is a school situation and they will arrange themselves in imaginary desks, each inventing their own character (the first in the class, the one who has a thousand excuses, the one who is always distracted, ...) Clap of hands. Another yells: " To the thief! He stole my purse!" Someone will be the thief, another the policeman, the passer-by, the dog, the traffic light, It is important that the conductor makes frequent interruptions and the participants follow the proposals promptly and constructively. Everything is valid, except getting hurt.

The aim of the activity is to enhance children's improvisation skills and creativity, and work on verbal expression and dramatization.



3. Body expression

3.1. Sound and movement - don't dare to stop

Participants of the exercise stand in a circle. The exercise leader starts the exercise. He says sounds of three or four syllables while making 3-4 movements. The next-door neighbor, without pausing, must repeat the movements with the sounds and turn to the next neighbor to show his movements and sounds. The goal of the exercise is that there is not a single pause between the participants. If something stops. The circle exercise starts again.

TIPS for improvisation:

- Do not stop yourself, do not be ashamed, do not be afraid of your movements and voice, rely on intuition.
- When it's your turn, just act.

3.2. One stands, one lies, one sits

3 participants are selected. Everyone decides which character from the chosen fairy tale they want to play. The audience suggests the place where the action takes place. The setting may be completely unrelated to the tale.

For **EXAMPLE** :

Uninhabited island; Planet Mars; Magic Garden; Computer games room etc.



Body expression

The audience suggests the circumstances, what just happened?

For **EXAMPLE** :

Shipwrecked; Saw an asteroid falling in the sky; A great storm had just broken;
There is a big sale of the year, etc.

Participants improvise and perform on stage, one lying down, the other standing, the third sitting. If someone changes their position, others must logically adjust and also change their position within 10-15 seconds. There must always be one sitting, one lying, and one standing actor on stage. If actors take more than 15 seconds to change position, a penalty point is awarded to the team. The team with the fewest penalty points wins.

TIPS for improvisation:

- **Learn to control your position on stage.**
- **See others when you play.**
- **Don't block another actor, don't turn your back.**
- **If you are blocked, notice this, change your place on the stage.**



Body expression

3.3. Alice's Kingdom

The leader of the exercise names what needs to be done and how to react. The action takes place in the imaginary kingdom of Alice.

- The rabbit is in a hurry - everyone runs in place with small steps.
- The Queen is coming - everyone freezes and doesn't move.
- The queen leaves - everyone relaxes.
- Party in the palace - everyone walks around the space and plays ladies and gentlemen.
- A special command after which someone can be knocked out of the game: Alice's room after... (The leader must say the number)

After hearing the number, the participants must form groups and hold hands. The groups must have as many people as the number stated. Participants who failed to form a group according to the number are eliminated from the exercise.

TIPS for improvisation:

- Winning is always fun, but sometimes it is very important to know when to stop and not fight at all costs.
- You have to learn to tell yourself: I've done everything, it's just a game, I can leave in peace.



REMINDER

IT'S JUST
A GAME



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Body expression

3.4. Written (script) and Body Expression (Role Play)

Work with a partner. Have a conversation. Discuss/brainstorm dialogue for role play. Student A: You are the rose. The rose is never happy. The rose tells the Little Prince her problems.

Student B: You are the Little Prince. The Little Prince tries to help the rose.

Questions:

- What problems and issues is the Rose experiencing in today's world? (e.g. one of the themes centres around looking beneath the surface to see inner beauty) do young people feel pressure to look/behave a certain way? Explore
- Why is the rose unhappy? Again, link with issues that young people may be facing – Relationships, friendships, love, truth and honesty.
- How can The Prince help the rose? E.g. listening (being a good friend). Empathy, showing compassion, giving advice etc.

Students will work in pairs or small groups and explore the various characters that The Prince has encountered (see below)

Each group will pick a character.

They will re-write the script from the point of view of The Prince if he were to advise the characters on how to improve the quality of life on that planet.

The groups would come up with a dialogue and act out the conversation they would have with their assigned character.



Body expression

3.5. Walking Debate

The room will be divided into 3 spaces. Teacher puts up sheet of paper in each space - Agree/Disagree/Unsure (see below)

Agree	Disagree	Unsure
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Teacher then reads out a number of statements. The students must decide whether they agree/disagree or are unsure, then walk towards the space and stand.

Teacher then picks out students from each space and invites them to share their reason for standing in that space.

Your Friend...

- 1.Allows you to be yourself
- 2.Makes too many demands on your time
- 3.Resents you having other friends
- 4.Supports you when you are in difficulty
- 5.Checks up on you when you are sick
- 6.Criticises you
- 7.Gets into a bad humour with you and doesn't explain why spreads rumours about you
- 8.Encourages you to try new things
- 9.Doesn't share your interests
- 10.Regularly cancels



Body expression

3.6. Role Play

In pairs, students make up a short role play to illustrate ways of ending a friendship. They can choose between 2 options, then act out the role play for the rest of the class

Option 1 -

Ending a friendship that is respectful and not hurtful to the other person

OR



Option 2 -

Ending a friendship in a way that is uncaring of the other person

At the end of role plays, the teacher invites students to explore and discuss ways of ending a friendship respectfully or talking to a friend about the friendship problems respectfully.

3.7. Class Rap

With the whole class working together, students make a class rap about all the things that they have in common.

They can then perform the rap.

Prompt to students - small changes to make other people in school feel that they belong are...



Body expression

3.8. Role Play

Using scenarios from the activity "Diary Entry", students are divided into groups and given a scenario.

They role-play the scenario with a student using the 'criticism' approach and a different student using the 'constructive' criticism approach.

While the students are performing the role-play, the rest of the class write a report using the following prompts:

What were the differences in approaches between both?
How did the person receiving the criticism react between both?
What would you do differently?

(Below is a brief synopsis of each character, for reference)

King

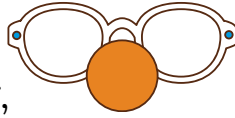


He depicts a self-centred person who thinks highly of himself. However, this superiority brings only loneliness to him and causes people, like the little Prince to leave him. He thinks he knows everything and possesses everything, but in truth, he is very ignorant of the world beyond his miniature planet. The King represents people in our society who thinks of themselves as superior beings. They don't listen to other's opinions and disregard the consequences of their actions. In the end, all they get is disrespect instead of the respect that they believe they should have.'



Body expression

The Clown (Vain Man)



The Clown, like the King, is also very conceited. However, unlike the King, he is so self-indulgent that he lives his life looking for admirers. The Clown is like a blind person who cannot see the beauty of the world because he is so focused on himself. He also does not recognize faults within himself because he's so self-absorbed. For a person to be respected and admired, one needs to contribute to the world or to make a difference in someone's life. The Clown does neither. He is living a life that is meaningless and full of lies because he fully believes that he's the most wonderful person in the world, even though he did nothing to build his reputation. Hence, One cannot judge a person by their appearance or by the way they talk. One can only judge a person by the things they do and don't do. He is vain and conceited.

The Flower



Flowers blossom from tiny sprouts which grow from tiny seeds under the earth. Throughout the life of a flower, it changes and grows and blossoms. The flower in the story grows like this too, except she grows to become more mature and caring. At the beginning she nags the little prince all the time and orders him to do stuff for her. She seems very conceited, but when the little Prince leaves, she feels very sad and thinks that it is her fault that the little Prince is leaving. The flower to the Prince, is the treasure and the "essential" that one can only see with the heart. He finally learns to appreciate her because he has lost her. The flower can be compared to mothers. Mothers nag their children all the time to pick their clothes, make the bed, take the trash out, and perform different duties. However, their intentions are good. They care deeply for their children and keep a roof over their children's heads even though they might seem unfair or annoying at times. It is when we lose our moms, that we will realise their importance in our lives.



Body expression

The Little Prince

The Little Prince represents innocence, ignorance, purity, and stupidity.



When the Prince goes to visit the people on the planets, he cannot understand them and thinks that they are very bizarre. He wonders why the Businessman counts the stars because he doesn't do anything with them except "possess" them. He also does not understand why his Flower is "ephemeral", and that he will lose her one day because she will die. These truths remain unclear throughout his journey because he is innocent. He cannot see the reality of the world around him, nor can he understand the mind of the adults. When he meets the Snake, the Snake does not bite him because he is so pure. The Little Prince does not know the dangers that a snake represents and so he talks to it just like he did to the Fox. His mind is unadulterated by evil, money, and greed like the mind of adults are. Furthermore, he can see what adults don't. For example, he finally understands the importance of the flower to him because she is unique to him and he is to her. Hence, he must protect and care for her. Adults don't understand things like this: they don't know why a flower would ever be as important as money or fame, nor would they care if a flower died and the stars cried. The Prince brings back childhood memories into the life of the narrator that he has long forgotten. He teaches the narrator to be responsible for those you love and have tamed, and to be yourself even though no one is listening to you. The little prince also teaches us that the best things in the world aren't necessarily the most expensive, the rarest, the fanciest, but the things that we see and can enjoy every day like friends and family.



Body expression

The Businessman

The Businessman represents the perfect adult because his mind is only occupied by numbers. As we grow up, our interests change because of what society demands of us. We must take responsibility and earn a living. Hence, we can no longer be children and play with toys or play on the playground.



The Tippler

The tippler, or the drunkard is a man who drinks because he is ashamed of drinking!! It's a vicious cycle that goes on forever...such men are seen in real life.

The Geographer

Why is it that the geographer speaks and records about these adventures, but never lives them? The geographer speaks of all this stuff involving geography but claims that he is a geographer not an explorer, therefore it is not "his" job to explore his planet.



Body expression

3. 9. Feelings ball

All students wander all over the room showing boredom or the feeling they are told. The facilitator passes the feeling-ball to a student, who will automatically express the opposite feeling. Nobody can change their body expression. If they do, they are eliminated. Students learn to self-control and express emotions even if they don't feel them. No words are allowed during this activity.



3. 10. Growing up

Students become seeds and have to act like that. They decide which type of plant they are, imagine it and behave like that when developing. They will grow up step by step. They will be “watered” and will have the steam. They will have sunlight and will develop some leaves, then their branches and some flowers. Depending on how they have imagined themselves, they will move their arms in a way or another.



Body expression

3. 11. Follow the leader

A student is chosen as the leader and is given a card with some emotions and actions to perform (the leader decides how). The other members of the group have to follow the leader, doing exactly the same. Music can be played while performing. No sound or words are allowed during the play. Nobody can stop or get lost. It is the leader who has to encourage them to follow, by smiling, using eye-contact or any other resource, but sound or verbal language.



Body expression

3. 12. Name-ball game

The children are in a circle; the first one with the ball starts and has to throw it to a child by pronouncing the name. If he does not remember the child's name, he is throwing it to or makes a mistake in throwing it; he becomes a statue.

Making them become a statue is an alternative to passing the message of 'you lost, you're out of the game'. This way, everyone stays in the circle and is part of the game but is frozen and motionless. This activity not only allows one to remain focused on the here and now, training one's memory to be able to remember the names of all the children, but also sharpens one's attention (because at any moment, one can be called and receive the ball), but above all creates awareness in one's own body, which must precisely remain still, statuesque.



Body expression

3. 13. Serpent

The children stand in a circle and hold hands. The teacher designates one person as the beginning of the snake and one as the end of the snake. The first child crawls, climbs and passes under the arms of the children in the circle until they reach the end of the snake, and all the other children follow, continuing to hold hands. Once they reach the end of the snake, the children must determine how to untangle themselves by holding hands.

The purpose of the activity is to work cohesively and as a group, as the children realise how important it is to feel united to complete the activity (the snake must never break, and the children must remain attached). Most importantly, they activate their wits together to decide how to untangle themselves.



Body expression

3. 14. Guess the item

Small groups of three participants are formed. Tickets are distributed to each group with the name/picture of some objects written on them. Players have about 10 minutes to find a way to build the object in question with their own bodies. You can also use your voice to reproduce noise. It is more interesting to propose objects that have movement and therefore try to reproduce them in movement. Examples: sewing machine, washing machine, telephone, fax, zip, ballpoint pen, pressure cooker, iron, coffee pot, etc. When the groups are ready (respect the preparation times!) they present their creation: the others have the task of guessing which what is it about. The objective of the activity is to improvise by expressing oneself with the body, but as a team, therefore working on cohesion and group work.



Body expression

3. 15. Living paintings

A scenic space is clearly defined and small groups of 6-10 people are formed. Each group is given a card suggesting an environment (for example: the seabed, the pond, the jungle, the metropolis, .). The members of the group first arrange themselves, together with the rest of the group, in front of the space then, without making verbal agreements, they try to reproduce in the defined space a picture that suggests the environment that has been assigned to them. The first member of the group enters the space and assumes a motionless position (for example, if the environment is the seabed, he can decide to be seaweed or hermit crab, or coral.). One by one the others follow him who must evaluate the proposal of those who preceded them to complete the picture. When all the members of the group have taken their positions, the public will have to try to guess which environment is represented. When the picture is complete, you can ask the participants to animate it and then leave room for a few minutes of improvisation. Then slowly, the group returns to immobility. The aim is to use the potential of one's body to express something to others, through improvisation and fantasy.



Body expression

3. 16. Mime my song

the children are arranged in two teams, and the teacher gives everyone the task of miming the title of a famous song. Each group will choose the music they want to propose.

A preparation time of 5 minutes is granted in a secluded place; then, each team presents its mime in the room.

At the end of the performance (only at the end), viewers will try to find out what song it is. This type of game takes place successfully when an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect has developed in the groups.



Body expression

3. 17. The statues

The participants move within a space (as in walks). The conductor suggests a state of mind (sadness, happiness, anger). and immediately after by a stop sign. Each participant must stop "like a statue" in the position that this mood suggests. At a new signal from the handler, the participants resume walking in an absolutely neutral way. There must be no reflection or "intellectualization" of the emotion: the suggested word must immediately find its physical expression. This exercise allows you to practice maintaining a still position and favours the search for spontaneity and the externalization of an emotion.



Body expression

3. 18. The passage:

The group stands in a circle. A ball is passed in always following the same sequence: Pietro always receives the ball from Simona and always passes it to Marta, Marta always receives the ball from Paolo and always passes it to Giorgia, etc. (avoid passing the ball to a neighbour) . The last player passes the ball to the first and the round starts again. When the circuit works you can introduce a second ball and then a third. This game lends itself well to attracting or recalling the concentration of the whole group, especially at the beginning or during a theatrical animation session; the aim is to develop expression, attention, contact and concentration.



Body expression


3. 19. The mirror

We arrange ourselves in this way: the couple facing the rest of the group, facing each other. We look into each other's eyes. After a moment of concentration, following the animator's signal, one of the two partners slowly begins to perform a series of movements that the other must reproduce as if it were a mirror and all the rest of the participants must do the same. They have to keep watching. It is important to move with the whole body (not just the upper part) and also involve the facial expression in the movement. The goal is to find harmony, so whoever proposes the movement must not try to surprise the other, but on the contrary, must check that his companions are able to follow him. It is useful to accompany the exercise with soft music. This exercise promotes concentration, awareness of one's own body and listening to the other.



Body expression

3. 20. Let's separate



The participants walk concentrated in the space. At the animator's proposal they must separate into two groups that will occupy two opposite corners of the space. The number of members of the two groups will be dictated by the animator. If the facilitator says "one", one of the participants must immediately go and occupy a corner of the room by himself while the rest of the group goes to occupy the opposite corner, forming a compact group. If the facilitator says "four", four participants will have to form a compact group in a corner of the room and the rest of the group will arrange themselves united in the opposite corner. Since the mandate has been given, everyone must "feel" where the others are going and act accordingly. The agreement must be reached without talking. This exercise trains concentration and teaches them to accept the proposal of others. It is also very useful for evaluating the position of each participant in the group: if a person is often alone or in a smaller group, he demonstrates that he is not afraid of confrontation with the rest of the group. On the contrary, those who avoid being alone in front of the rest of the group still need to overcome a series of inhibitions before exposing themselves in front of the gaze of the group (perhaps in a game of individual improvisation).



4. Written expression

4.1. Diary Entry

Keep a simple diary where you daily write about how you can build a sense of belonging in your family/community/school

What activities in school could I sign up to?

Are there groups that share my interests in my community? Such as art, chess, sport etc.

Can I contribute to family matters more? Such as helping with chores, minding siblings, ringing grandparents etc

4.2. Flipping Negative Criticism to Constructive Criticism

Teacher hands out cards with simple statements on them. Students 'Flip' the Negative Criticism into Constructive Criticism.

Example:

Your friend has bought a new dress and it does not look well on her.

Negative Criticism - "That dress is horrible on you!"

Flip the negative into constructive... "That colour looks well on you but the cut of your other dress really suits you"

Scenarios can be adapted to suit by the teacher



Improvisation TIPS

1. Watch yourself on video

What's the most effective way to see your strengths and weaknesses and improve? Record yourself and watch it back! Public speakers consider this a must and so should you.

Don't like watching yourself on video? Get over it! If you want other people to watch you, the least you can do is watch yourself, too. It's one of the best ways to improve your performance at anything!

2. Give yourself blind offers

Don't know what to say?

Not sure what to do?

Make a blind offer to yourself!

A blind offer is typically when you hand some invisible object to someone else and they let you know what you handed them. It's blind because you don't know what it is until later. A blind offer to yourself is exactly the same.

Pick something imaginary up without knowing what it is! Make some gesture or movement and only justify it after the fact. You reach to pick something up. It's the baseball glove from when you were 7. Or the baby shoes you bought for the child that was never born. Or the treasure map your parents left you. You might even know what you're picking up, and abandon that for whatever new idea comes to you. That's taking the unknown rather than the known! Live dangerously!



Improvisation TIPS

3. Try being incongruent

In real life, people say one thing verbally while their body language says something entirely different. It happens all the time. On stage, people often are more congruent. Someone is supposed to seduce another person and they just come out and say it and their body language totally matches. In real life, that person might not say anything directly. They may fear rejection, they may not be allowed to seduce them because of a working relationship. Whatever! There are a lots of things like that. Maybe you don't like someone, but you're in a situation where you have to be polite to them. You can't just say, "I think you're a creep!" But your body language brings the idea across. Subtly. This can be incredibly interesting to an audience! Rather than being direct in your attitudes, desires and beliefs -- try to hide them. Resist the idea verbally while giving in physically or vice versa. Say, "No, we can't!" While physically you move closer to the person you desire so badly. It's hot stuff!

4. Practice not advancing

This can be a very humorous tool...Imagine you're about to open the fridge door. It's stuck. You pull harder. It's still stuck. You get someone to help you pull. It won't budge. You try a rope and pulley system. Nope! You grab a gun and shoot the door. No luck! You get some dynamite and try to blow it open! Damn this fridge! That's the act of staying with one activity. You're not advancing into another action. You stay with the action of trying to open the fridge. You try a dozen different ways and it gets more interesting the more you try!



Improvisation TIPS

5. Change pace

Some people talk and move slow all the time. Some people talk a mile a minute and gesture wildly -- all the time! If you want to portray different characters and personalities, you'd better be able to change your pace! It's one of the simplest, easiest ways to convey a new character. If it's a stretch for you to talk fast, practice! If talking slow and moving less makes you want to jump off a cliff, practice! (Practice the slowness, not the cliff jumping..) Simply having a different pace than your scene partner can make for great humour and delight an audience.

6. Forget being funny

The more you focus on being funny, the more you'll become driven by a need to please others. You'll lose your spontaneity and become nothing more than a mere slave to the whims of laughter. You may notice how a lot of comedians tend to not be so happy in their real lives. Laughter is one of those things that tends to be as fickle as love. The more you try to force it, the more it moves away. Focusing on anything else at all is will be more productive.



Improvisation TIPS

7. Utilize "relationship driven" vs. "action driven" scenes.

A relationship driven scene is interesting because of the dynamics between the characters. (It can be a scene with just one person and still be about the person's relationship with themselves or the people they describe.). An action driven scene is about what happens. Someone discovers a body, they try to hide it, someone starts shooting at them, they are pulled into a seedy underworld of lies, lust and revenge. A scene or story can contain elements of both. It's useful to aim for one, or to notice where it's naturally going and put the emphasis there. You'll notice that any book, play or Hollywood movie may be more focused on action (most of them) or on character and relationships. Often it's the relationship driven stories that move us most.

8. Make emotional sounds. Ummm hmmm...

In real life people go, "Ah! Oh! Hmmm. Ooops! Argh! Ohhhh! Ummm hmmm! Rawr!" We make all kinds of noises without noticing it. And, once we go on stage and get nervous, we go into talking-head mode. We don't make our normal expressive noises. So, try adding some emotional noises to your scenes and find out what happens! Even if it feels unnatural at first. You'll probably discover that you come across as more expressive and natural.



Improvisation TIPS

9. Avoid too many questions?

We often ask questions as a way to avoid adding anything ourselves.

We do it as a way to make the other person do the creating. We want them to contribute the ideas. Then, we may even block those ideas we asked for! Try doing scenes without asking any questions and find out what happens. Make more statements. Make demands! It's likely they'll be more active and you'll put yourself more on the line.



10. Create a tilt.

A tilt is when you take the happy world that's been created and you turn it on its head!

- You're talking to your loving wife and discover she's been having an affair...
- You're talking to your son and discover he died and he's asking you to avenge his murder...
- You're in the arms of your lover who reveals that he's a werewolf...

Once you tilt the scene, it becomes tremendously interesting to find out what happens next!



Improvisation TIPS

11. Speak in gibberish or blahs.



One of the most useful ways to get you out of your own head and into the moment is with gibberish! Take away the focus on words and you focus on your scene partner, the audience, your surroundings. You'll move your body more and become more expressive. We can demonstrate how much you can convey without words. We can convey a whole story to an audience entirely through gibberish and body language. An easy way to make gibberish even simpler is to just say blahs. "Blah, blah blah blah blah." It's easier and requires even less focus than gibberish! (Though, it is a lot of 4-letter words...) Make up your own language and have fun!

12. Play with how you move.

How you move says volumes about you before you say a word! You walk, gesture, sit, and stand in a way particular to you. Just look at your walk. How quickly or slowly do you walk? What parts of your body swing and move as you walk? Where is your body bound up and immobile? Where do you look and focus as you walk? You can play with and alter all of these things and become a totally different person! If you normally walk fast, try moving slowly. If you normally walk in a relaxed loose way, try being tight and bound. If you normally swing your arms, try keeping them still. This will do more than create a different impression on the audience and make you look more interesting in scenes. It will actually change what you say and how you respond to others. How we move is who we are -- try changing it!



Improvisation TIPS

13. Learn to use eye contact

Eye contact is one aspect of body language and it has an incredible impact. The first step is becoming aware of eye contact. Use it as a means to convey a message about who you are and what your relationship is to the other person.

Do you make strong eye contact?

Do you look away a lot?

Do you blink a lot?

Do you look more at one person than another?

What does that say about you?

Plus, if you're interacting with an audience, learn to make eye contact with everyone in a way that makes them feel seen. Has someone ever looked at you in a way where you felt they didn't really see you? You need to learn a combination of eye contact and facial expression to make whoever you're looking at feel acknowledged. And, you need to do that with the entire audience. If you only look at certain people or certain parts of the audience, the people you ignore will feel weird and ignored.

14. Use costumes.



Again, you can just make everyone imagine that you're wearing a suit of armour or whatever. And yet, remember how fun it was as a child when you played dress up? All children do it. It's fun, playful and adds an element of variety.



Improvisation TIPS

15. Change small body language to create big effects.

Part of being an amazing improviser is becoming a body language expert! How much do you blink? How many gestures do you make? Are they fast or slow? Do you speak more to one person than another? How quickly do you reply when asked a question? Do you laugh a lot? Are you quiet or do you talk a lot? Do you smile much? Do you have straight posture or do you slouch? Do you pace the floor or stand still? All of these things and many more can create huge differences in how you come across. What's more, if you change one you're likely to change several. Change your posture and you're likely to change your eye contact and speed of movement. Change how much you blink and you may move around more. Pick one specific piece of body language and focus on that. Find out what else changes. Discover what effect that creates. Small things can carry a big impact!

16. Include the audience.



Get the audience involved in as many ways as you can think of:

- Personal suggestions from their lives: breakups, how they met, life changing decisions...
- Borrow objects from them.
- Have them assist in game.
- Put them on the line (if you fail a challenge, they're the ones who suffer some horrible fate!)
- Interact with them during scenes and games.
- Have them sing or do special effects noise.
- Make a group of them into a committee.



Improvisation TIPS

17. Sing! Sing! Sing!



If you're in improve for any period of time you'll wind up singing. It's going to happen! Bite the bullet and get on with it! Start practicing. You can turn on music tracks without words and make up lyrics. Or, you can just start to sing and gradually a tune will develop. Many people have what amounts to a phobia of singing. They will defend it by saying, "I can't sing! You've never heard a voice as bad as mine! I can't carry a tune, can't even push one around! Birds will fly before you get me to sing in front of an audience!!!" What's actually the case is that at some point in your past you received a negative comment about your singing and it hurt your feelings. YOU may have been the one saying it! Or, you got such little encouragement as a child you just didn't think you were good at anything. Whatever. It all comes back to self-esteem. Singing is something every single person should be able to do for their own enjoyment. It's something every child enjoys and if you didn't keep that joy you can get it back.

18. Take risks

A risk is something that scares you. It's when your heart beats faster. You try a game you don't know if you can succeed in. You take an improve class even though you're sure you'll fail. You go in front of an audience for the first time. You agree with your partners ideas even though you think they're crazy and won't work. You do it even though every fiber in your body tells you to stop. That's risk. Building that habit is one of the best things you can do to improve your life. It really is...



Improvisation TIPS

19. Just die!

There are certain things a lot of improvisers just won't do. Like dying.

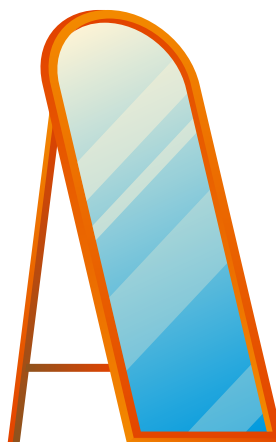


That's because they would be out of the scene.

Leave the scene before it's over? Never! In fact, any strong action: dying, breaking up, killing, or firing someone is likely to be put off as long as possible. The improvisers are told one of them has to die in the scene. Minutes go by and they're making veiled threats. Hours pass. Night falls and soon the sun starts to rise in the east. Everyone is alive. As in life, you have to take a strong action. It may seem like drawing it out adds drama. No, it adds time. It adds talking. It adds boredom. Rarely does it add drama. That's because it's an escape from the unknown. It's an escape from the irreversible. It's taking a strong stand. Rather than beating around the bush, just hurry up and get it out of the way. Then, find out how it plays out. It's scary. Fear is interesting.

20. The Mirror

Two actors stare into each other's eyes and try to anticipate each other's moves, exactly as if it were a reflection in the mirror. Everything must be imitated: from movements to facial expressions.



Improvisation TIPS

21. Recognize the emotion

It is not a real game, but an emotional recognition test: faces are shown that are expressing emotions (even uncommon ones, such as contempt or anguish) and the children have to comment on the images giving their own idea of what they see.



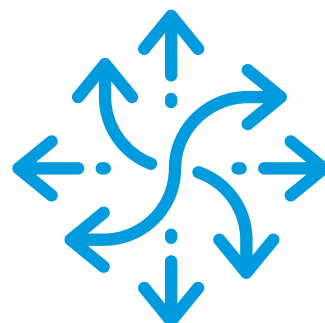
22. Sequence pictures

The technique uses a series of fragments of a picture put together to express specific emotions or values that each fragment represents.

Needs to be noted that the sequence can be chosen orderly or sometimes random for a more powerful effect and emphasis on the aimed value.

23. Literacy Production

Using the text of the story as a starting point, the children explored and played with word patterns that resulted in the creation of literacy and new version of the story, using new words and created values.





8 STORIES

FOR CREATIVITY



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