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Team-Written Residency Project
6 December 2022

Some General Questions:

Shared Values: A short statement answering the question: *What core values do the members of your group share and how are they represented in your residency plan?*

Our core values concern using theatre to create a space for joy, laughter, and a communal safe experience for those who might not have it. We applied these values to the personal identities within our group and decided to form a residency plan specifically designed for high school international students—introducing them to improvisation comedy in both Western and Eastern practices. The goal would be to break down international barriers, create a sense of belonging and a lack of inhibitions, and to create an ensemble with improved improvisational skills.

Duration/Time of year (i.e. 5 sessions from September – December), content or theme, structure of residency.

The class will start the second Friday of September and run every other week until early December. The residency would be at a specific American private school with a large population of international students— and could be applied around the country and to public institutions after the residency program.

Class grade or population age, type or types, group size

Freshman and Sophomores (Ages 14-16), international students (with a few liaisons from the local university studying International education, and group size preferably 20 maximum, (16 preferred).

Type of Artists/Art Forms involved

Theatrical improvisation, long and short form (from the tradition of Viola Spolin) and then branching out into Eastern practices of communal storytelling of the individual through improvisation.

Type of stakeholder(s) involved and role of this partner in the residency i.e. General Education Classroom Teacher, Theater Teacher, Youth Worker, etc.

Partnering with a local improvisation comedy theatre and a local school, with artists who could help teach the first two weeks, and then someone from an international background could help focus on the last three weeks (all teachers— from the school and the outside— present for the whole residency still).

Residency Team planning methods and partnership/collaboration strategies with the stakeholder(s)

Theatre teacher partnering with the local improvisation theatre and a teacher with international education experience. Strategies would be collaborating a wide variety of techniques, the homeroom drama teacher would help identify students most in need of such a residency, and the outside improv group would get to know the students that could potentially be their artistic collaborators in the future.

Overall Residency Theme, Aim and/or Goal

The overall residency theme is Creating a Safe and Accessible Space for International Students using the Power of Theatre, specifically improvisational storytelling across Eastern and Western culture. The Overall Goal is to give international students a forum and chance to express themselves *clearly* and *collaboratively* without the barriers of language, culture, and stereotype.

Overall Residency Objectives

The objectives would be to break down cultural barriers, give students tangible improvisational comedy and storytelling skills, and connect students to the local theatrical and international community.

Overall Learning Outcomes (What will students will know/understand/be able to do)

Students will be able to improvise long-form stories and short-form games in their first language and learned languages, as well as in multiple cultural-artistic forms.

Students will be able to confidently and safely express personal stories, and collaborate and listen to each other in order to theatricalize those stories.

Assessment Methods: Formative, Summative, Qualitative, Quantitative, Rubrics, Reflection documents, etc.

Qualitative, participation-based, journaling.

Unit Title: Improvising Internationally

Focus of the Unit: How can we utilize Western forms of improvisational comedy to include Eastern theatrical practices, engage international students, and create effective group storytelling?

Overarching Unit Objective(s)	Summative Assessment Strategy(ies)
Content Objective: Students will be able to effectively and engagingly improvise long-form stories and short-form games in their first language and learned languages, as well as in multiple cultural-artistic forms.	Performance Tasks: Final Performances Criteria: Engaging, clear, and present performances, conventions of C.R.O.W. and yes-and utilized, collaborative/empathetic partner work. Documentation: Rubric with teacher comments
Language-based Objective: Students will be able to confidently and safely express personal stories, and collaborate and listen to each other in order to theatricalize those stories. Students will be able to articulate and describe conventions of improvisation and improvised devised storytelling.	Performance Tasks: Journaling activity, Criteria: Completion Documentation: Final Story Outline, Final Journal, Feedback Form

A. Relevant Learning Standards:

Relevant New York State Standards for the Arts:

TH Pr. 4: Analyze, interpret and select artistic work for presentation.

1. The essence of theater is storytelling.
 - a. HSIb. Shape character choices by using given circumstances in a drama or theater work.

TH Cn. 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

2. Theater artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created theatrical processes and productions to inform their own work.
 - a. HSIa. Research how theater artists apply creative processes to tell stories.

B. Context for Learning:

Audience:

9th-10th grade, Drama 1 A or Drama 1 B – depending on the semester, and urban demographic with a number of ELLs and students with special needs, so lessons must be appropriately modified based on student need.

Modifications:

- Students who read or write in English below grade level: Pre-teach keywords and phrases through examples and graphic organizers (e.g., word cluster, manipulatives, visuals). Have students use pre-taught keywords and graphic organizers to complete sentence starters

Previous Knowledge:

Students must be able to understand basic English (can be below the grade-level), participate in group discussion, present group research to the class, and physically and vocally participate in theatrical exercises.

International Teachers must be able to aid in the translation of both language and cultural terms, maintain student safety, articulate Non-Western improvised forms with examples and experience, and guide students who need particular help.

Teaching Artists must be able to improvise at the advanced level in both long and short forms, understand and be able to effectively teach Viola Spolin and Del Close's methodology of effective improvised storytelling, understand and articulate (at at least a basic level) Non-Western improvised theatre forms, work with a high school level student body, utilize and employ cultural competency and DEI training, and effectively articulate these artistry skills into an engaging 5-week workshop form.

Lesson #1 of 5: Improv 101!

Focus Question: What is improvisation— short-form, long-form, dramatic/comedic— and what tools can make Spolin traditions of improv most effective?

Lesson Objectives	Assessment Strategy(ies)
Content Objective: Students will be able to effectively improvise short-form scenes, establishing character, location, objective, relationship, and 'Yes, and-ing' each other.	Performance Tasks: Relationship/Location (OR Party Quirks/The Dating Game) Criteria: Active and safe participation, consistent attempt at applying the basic tenets of improvisation. Documentation: N/A
Language-Based Objective: Students will be able to articulate what makes an improvised scene more or less effective than another, and what tools are helpful for them inside an improvised scene.	Performance Tasks: Viola Spolin Mini-Lecture, CROW Mini-lecture, Lily the Loquacious Lion. Criteria: Participation in discussion, listening, peer feedback Documentation: Journal

Related Standards:

TH Cn. 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

3. Theater artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created theatrical processes and productions to inform their own work.
 - a. HSl.a. Research how theater artists apply creative processes to tell stories.

Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:

- Students who read or write in English below grade level: Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples and graphic organizers (e.g., word cluster, manipulatives, visuals). Have students use pre-taught key words and graphic organizers to complete sentence starters

Spatial Organization: No chairs will be needed in the room, work will be done standing or sitting utilizing the full space.

Materials Needed: Speaker, White board.

Procedures

Pre-workshop: Music playlist, find circle.

1. **Warm Up:** Students circle up, teacher begins by inhaling energy, then passing on an exhale across the circle. The next person repeats, and so on, increasing in speed and physical involvement (encouraging the use of the whole body)-- "Begin to unglue your feet," "Bigger and faster." Encourage more connection and creativity in types of breath being passed, such as through an imaginary straw of your fingers, with one arm, with a kick, etc. **(5 mins)**
 - a. *What made this game easier? Harder? Why? How does this apply to sending energy or text to another person?*
2. **1, 2, 3 (Boal TO):** Students partner up and pick an A and B partner. Teaching artists demonstrate that A's start, and partner's count from 1-3 alternating. After 1 minute of that, teachers add A to create a sound and movement that replaces 1. Repeat, then B creates a sound/movement to replace 2. Repeat, A creates a sound/movement to replace 2. **(5 mins)**
3. **3-Line Scene:** Now, instead of movements and sounds, the teaching artist demonstrates, we can start making up text! Ask all B's to mix up on one side of the room, A's on the other. B leads with the first line of the scene— (teaching artists will get calls for this class, students for the next one)-- A responds, B ends/finds a reason to leave. The lines continue to switch until everyone has worked multiple times. **(10 minutes)**
4. **Mini-Lecture: Viola Spolin:** Everyone sits in a circle, and a teaching artist describes some history about Viola Spolin, Del Close, and Second City. Following lead a discussion answering the below questions:
 - a. *What comes to your mind when you think of improvisation? What times have you seen improvisation onstage— and has it been funny, serious, or in between? How and why might different cultures interact differently with the universal concept of improvisation?* **(5 mins)**
5. **YES, AND→ Lily the Loquacious Lion:** In a circle we go around one by one, one person making a statement to describe Lily the Loquacious Lion, and the next person "yes, and"ing that suggestion with an addition to Lily the Loquacious Lion. We can now use inspiration from this game for our final game! **(5 mins)**
6. **Mini-Lecture: CROW and Death to Improv?** Everyone sits in the same circle and we chat about the four basic tenets of a strong improvisational scene— CHARACTER (who are you?), RELATIONSHIP (how do you know this person? Functional and Relational), OBJECTIVE, WHERE, integrating what we've gained from the Yes-and game and setting up the final game. Additionally, we identify some less helpful improv habits we all might try out— Asking questions, starting with small talk, pimping, meta-theatrical, no-ing (no, but, is different!). **(5 minutes)**
7. **Guess the Relationship/Character:** One volunteer will be sent out of the room, while the other participants will collaboratively decide on who that volunteer is and where they will be in the scene (Make the location separate from occupation or relationship— ie. if the relationship is doctor and patient, then make sure the location is not a doctors office). The volunteer entering the scene will start with a line establishing where they just came from and who they might be (more dynamic than hi!). The volunteer already in the scene has to lightly give hints to the other person concerning who they might be and where they might be (without directly telling them or giving it away initially). The scene is over once the guesser naturally integrates a correct guess considering who they are and where they are in the scene (and audience applause helps). **(20 minutes)**
 - a. **IF TOO CONFUSING: Party Quirks:** One host and five guests are attending a party. The audience will give the guests each different 'quirks' that the host must guess through subtle character behavior and interaction. Quirks can include character, but ideally should be states of being or relationships to the host and each other. The host must establish location specifically through setting up the party at the beginning. The game is over once the host has guessed who all the guests' are, and once the guests are found they must find a justifiable reason to leave the party.

- b. **OTHER BACK-UP: The Dating Game:** One host, one guest, and three potential suitors are on a Dating Show. The audience decides three individual quirks, similar to above, for each of the suitors while the guest is outside. Subtly through the hosts' questions, the guest will gather clues considering who they are. The host will lastly invite the guest to pick who they want to date and guess who they are— “Well, I don’t want to date X, whose pants are obviously on fire...”
8. **Group Discussion/Wrap Up:** Sitting back down in a circle, we’ll discuss the following game. *What was most effective in the scene at keeping us engaged? What helpful ‘gifts’ did your partner give you to help the scene? Where did you see CROW? Yes, and? What did each character want? What wasn’t helpful to the scene? (5 mins)*

Homework: Write a short journal about your experience today. *What did you already know? What questions do you have? What tools did you learn that were useful? What wasn’t as useful?*

Lesson #2 of 5: Improv 201

Focus Question: How can we effectively utilize CROW, yes-and, and moment work to make engaging long-form improvisation sets?

Lesson Objectives	Assessment Strategy(ies)
Content Objective: Students will be able to improvise longer form scenes using a call from the audience.	Performance Tasks: Montage, Tap Out Criteria: Active and safe participation, consistent attempt at applying learned tenants of improvisation. Documentation: N/A
Language-Based Objective: Students will be able to differentiate longer and short-form improvisational forms, and what tools make them most engaging/effective for audiences.	Performance Tasks: Freeze, Alien-Gibberish Interview Criteria: Discussion participation (articulation of said learning objective in discussion). Documentation: Journal

Related Standards:

TH Pr. 4: Analyze, interpret and select artistic work for presentation.

2. The essence of theater is storytelling.
 - b. HSIb. Shape character choices by using given circumstances in a drama or theater work.

TH Cn. 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

4. Theater artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created theatrical processes and productions to inform their own work.
 - a. HSIa. Research how theater artists apply creative processes to tell stories.

Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:

- Students who read or write in English below grade level: Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples and graphic organizers (e.g., word cluster, manipulatives, visuals). Have students use pre-taught key words and graphic organizers to complete sentence starters

Spatial Organization: Circle without chairs for first half of class, transition to desks for the Mini-Lecture and group scoring, expand around the room for scene rehearsal, Form an audience for Group Share.

Materials Needed: None!

Procedures

Pre-workshop: Music playlist, find circle.

1. Vocal/Physical Warm-Up: The Drop Down

- a. Have students roll down in their own time, vertebrae by vertebrae, stopping and gently shaking or twisting at the sticky spots
- b. Once at the bottom rag doll to the right and left, shake head yes and no
- c. Roll up one vertebra at a time, repeating with sticky spots
- d. Once at the top check-in with center, play with balance in toes or heels, R/L
- e. Inhale/Hold/Exhale on 4, 6, 8 count
- f. Inhale/Hold/Hum on 4, 6, 8 count
- g. Student volunteer stretch
- h. Student volunteer tongue twister
- i. Physical shakeout (8, 6, 4, 2 1) **(7 mins)**

2. Alien/Gibberish Interview: A host interviews two people— a gibberish alien martian, and their interpreter. Conduct a few short interviews to practice saying “yes-and” to given information in a scene. This also provides a good warm up structure to start. **(10 mins)**

3. Transition, Mini-Lecture: What is Long-Form Improv? As we transition into a proscenium audience setup, explain how long-form improvisation adds narrative and universe building to the form. Explain a little bit about the Harold and how universe-building might create a longer plot. **(5 mins)**

4. Freeze → Tap Out: A good warm up into the Montage. First start with the basic fundamentals of Freeze— two people are onstage, starting a scene (ideally physically involved). When the teaching artist and later a participant yells, “Freeze!” Both players freeze and the caller gets up to replace them, inhabit the *exact physical image*, and then create a completely different scene. Tap out works with more flexibility— instead of freezing, players can simply tap each other out and replace one character, while the remaining character stays the same. **(10 mins)**

5. Montage: Students will now attempt a Montage— stringing together multiple scenes into one single plot narrative. Multiple characters can enter, exit, the sweeping gestures clears the stage and the tapping tool can replace characters within the same universe. Similar to tap out but now we can add more people and continue more of a narrative. **(25 mins)**

6. Wrap Up: Sitting back down in a circle, we’ll discuss the following montage. *What was most effective at keeping us engaged? What helpful ‘gifts’ did your partner give you to help the scene? Where did you see CROW? Yes, and? What did each of our many characters want? What wasn’t helpful to the montage? How are short and long-form improv different? The same?* **(3 mins)**

Homework: Write a short journal about your experience today. *What did you already know? What questions do you have? What tools did you learn that were useful? What wasn’t as useful? ALSO: Think about a time you’ve laughed the hardest.*

Lesson #3 of 5: Storytelling

Focus Question: How can we share personal stories to derive dramatic conflict; present in effective improvisational scenes?

Lesson Objectives	Assessment Strategy(ies)
Content Objective: Students will be able to share both pedestrian and more personal stories in order to better remember details and conceptualize the art of storytelling.	Performance Tasks: Forbidden Word/Whole Group Story Criteria: Active and positive participation Documentation:
Language-Based Objective: Students will be able to describe narrative similarities in personal stories which depict moments of dramatic conflict.	Performance Tasks: Two Truths and a Lie Criteria: Listening to others and being able to share others' truths and lies Documentation: Brief Notes
Affective Objective (optional): Students will be able to connect shared experiences and backgrounds to a stronger and safer sense of community.	Performance Tasks: Group Storytelling Criteria: Active and positive participation Documentation: Brief Notes

Related Standards:

TH Pr. 4: Analyze, interpret and select artistic work for presentation.

3. The essence of theater is storytelling.
 - b. HSIb. Shape character choices by using given circumstances in a drama or theater work.

TH Cn. 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

5. Theater artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created theatrical processes and productions to inform their own work.
 - a. HSIa. Research how theater artists apply creative processes to tell stories.

Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:

- Students who read or write in English below grade level: Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples and graphic organizers (e.g., word cluster, manipulatives, visuals). Have students use pre-taught key words and graphic organizers to complete sentence starters

Spatial Organization: First chairs on the edges of the room

Materials Needed: 20-22 chairs

Procedures

Pre-workshop: Music playlist, find circle.

1. **Warm Up: Wahhh:** Using a sword movement, the participants stand in a circle and pass the 'wahhh.' The two students on the outside of the receiving 'wahh'-er also 'wahhh' the center. If something is out of rhythm or someone is imaginary-sliced without their knowledge, they are out. But we will play without outs because the purpose of this is not outs. **(5 mins)**
2. **Forbidden Word/Whole Group Story:** Students circle up and go around, each saying a word that is *Forbidden* in the conversation/storytelling process. Every time from now on that the word is said, everyone must freeze for five seconds. Once "break" is said by the person who own the forbidden word, we can return to the conversation.
 - a. **Story Prompt:** What is the time you've laughed the hardest? **(20 mins)**
3. **Two Truths and a Lie:** In small groups of four, each person (2 minutes per person— call for each switch) will share two truths and a lie. Then, the other two group members must guess which one's the lie! **(10 mins)**
4. **Group Storytelling:** In the same groups, students will share their stories with each other. The teaching artist will take a timer to emphasize timeliness and assign the other partners the ability to rearticulate the same stories back to their partners to ensure sharp listening and moment skills.
 - a. **First Prompt:** Describe a time you felt truly disappointed with humanity. Other prompt: describe a time when technology truly failed you (keyboard slam anger!)
 - b. **Second Prompt:** What's one of your top 3 embarrassing stories?
 - c. **Third Prompt:** Describe a time you felt lost, or unsure, but overcame a struggle in your life. Alternate prompt: Describe a time that restored your faith in humanity. **(30 mins)**
5. **Wrap Up:** Get back in a circle, and have students share one word for how the storytelling impacted them. Ask students to reflect on which stories, until the next session, impacted them more than others, and lightly journal about it. **(5 mins)**

Homework: Journal

Lesson #4 of 5: Making Your Stories More Specific

Focus Question: How can we specify our stories and utilize tools of Spolin improv to fit the goal of developing a long-term improvisational show?

Lesson Objectives	Assessment Strategy(ies)
Content Objective: Students will be able to recall dramatic detail and begin improvising short moments from stories.	Performance Tasks: Mediation for <i>Rememorizing</i>, Nonverbal Improvisation, Discuss the Outline of the Show & First Round of <i>Rememorizing</i> Criteria: Actively participate in sharing and developing the outline of the story. Documentation: Brief Notes.
Language-Based Objective: Students will be able to use long-form tools such as the sweep, sound effects, world-building, object-building, and tap out	Performance Tasks: Nonverbal Improvisation, Scene Rehearsal Criteria: Utilizing learned short-form and long-form techniques in storytelling Documentation: Brief Notes

Related Standards:

TH Pr. 4: Analyze, interpret and select artistic work for presentation.

4. The essence of theater is storytelling.
 - b. HSIb. Shape character choices by using given circumstances in a drama or theater work.

Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:

- Students who read or write in English below grade level: Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples and graphic organizers (e.g., word cluster, manipulatives, visuals). Have students use pre-taught key words and graphic organizers to complete sentence starters

Spatial Organization: All people make a large circle. After the warm-up finished, students divide to four groups to discuss.

Materials Needed: Papers, writing utensils, 20-22 chairs, a set of 5 various props (phone, blanket, cup, etc.)

Procedures

Pre-workshop: Music playlist, find a circle.

1. **Warm-up: Clapping Game:** One student is sent out of the room, and the rest of the class decides on a task they must complete (ex., Jump, pick up a chair, make a sound, etc.). Then, the class must use applause as the litmus test for whether the student is warmer or colder to guessing the task. They must physically try to guess what it is. The game is over when there is a standing ovation. **(10 mins)**
2. **Mediation for Rememorizing:** Using meditation help students recreate a significant story they told last week in their memory. Start with refocusing on the breath in a comfortable position and a short body scan. Explain *Rememorizing*: a term to describe remembering memory but with even *more* specific detail than one might. Quote *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (“rememory”). Go through sensory details from the beginning to the end of the story— *What does the room look like? What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? Are their people there?* **(10 mins)**
3. **Discuss the Outline of the Show & First Round of Rememorizing:** After groups decide which story to choose, they can start to discuss which part of the story will be adopted to improvise the show.
 - a. *Which story engages the most people? What kinds of roles does each story offer? What is the main dramatic conflict of each story— and which is the most theatrical? Can you combine stories?* **(15 mins)**
4. **Nonverbal Improvisation:** In separate corners of the room, have students *nonverbally* improvise their chosen story, emphasizing that it doesn’t have to be perfect; it’s just about developing the physical location and language of the story. This might help figure out who is who and what kind of moments are the most important **goalposts** to hit in the story. **(7 mins)**
5. **Scene Rehearsal (23 mins):** Work on running the scene, focusing on developing details, this time *with* words. Emphasize this is improvisational, and thus can change *every. Single. Time!!* Students will start to develop the details. All kinds of elements could be added to their improvisational show— including tools from short-form like: *Could you get a call from the audience for a part of the story? Could you use sound and movement for a part of the story? Could you make a certain ending different every time?*
 - a. *Might you have an important prop you can bring for the story?* They can also explore improvisationally picking up the base props to utilize in the story (a practice in Non-Western forms of improv and community storytelling)

Homework: Organize the notes into an outline. If they need extra time, they can rehearse outside of the workshop.

Lesson #5 of 5: Final Performances

Focus Question: How can apply our story outlines, rehearsal, and the Spolin techniques we've garnered to a spontaneous long-form improvisation play?

Lesson Objectives	Assessment Strategy(ies)
Content Objective: Students will be able to improvise their group stories and use both Western and Non-Western improvisational techniques.	Performance Tasks: Final Performances Criteria: All students involved in the performance, story clear and obviously improvised, goalposts clear, props utilized, etc. Documentation: Brief Notes
Language-Based Objective: Students will be able to participate as active audience members and get calls, utilize props, and CROW within their stories.	Performance Tasks: Final Performances Criteria: Active participation and listening. Documentation: Brief Notes
Affective Objective (optional): Students will be able to process their unique stories through a dramatic lens, and thus better be able to act safely and rationally through emotional conflicts within their own life.	Performance Tasks: Group Storytelling Criteria: N/A Documentation: Journal

Related Standards:

TH Pr. 4: Analyze, interpret and select artistic work for presentation.

5. The essence of theater is storytelling.

c. HSIb. Shape character choices by using given circumstances in a drama or theater work.

Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:

- Students who read or write in English below grade level: Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples and graphic organizers (e.g., word cluster, manipulatives, visuals). Have students use pre-taught key words and graphic organizers to complete sentence starters

Spatial Organization: Open space for the first half of class

Materials Needed: Chairs, .

Procedures

Before

1. **Zip Zap Zop:** In a circle, students pass lightning energy in the order Zip, Zap, and the Zop. After one practice round, you're out if you hesitate, say the wrong order, or are not clear *with eye contact* about who you're sending the zip/zap/zop to. The winner gets to lead the vocal jam! **(5 mins)**
2. **Vocal Jam:** Students are arranged in a circle. In the first round, the teacher begins by introducing a vocal or percussive choice. The rest of the students join in, one by one. Once everyone is participating, the teacher encourages students to speed up, slow down, get louder, quieter, and then end. Play as many rounds as time allows, with different students beginning the exercise in later rounds. **(5 mins)**
3. **PERFORMANCES!:** Students perform their scenes! Improv! Can be totally (should be) from your rehearsals! **(45 mins)**
4. **Group Share/Wrap Up:** In a circle, we reflect on the scenes.
 - a. *What did you notice? Did you see yourself in any of these stories? What did these stories help you process? How did it feel to be the protagonist/antagonist, etc? How was this different from other improvised versions? What was most effective? What did you learn from this workshop? What did you like/appreciate?* **(5 mins)**

Homework: Final reflection in Journals (optional)