

Sample Lesson Plan: First day of class

Bridge: 10 mins

Name Game: Get them on their feet, in their bodies, and comfortable with being silly.

1. Demonstrate: Using the first letter of your preferred name, choose an adjective and a movement to go along with it.
 - For example: "Silly Sofia!" As I make a clown face and stomp around in a circle.
2. The group repeats the name and gesture, imitating the intonation and facial expression.
3. We move around the circle, repeating each name that has gone before and adding to it. By the end, we should be familiar with everyone's face and name (and know a bit about how they perceive themselves and how comfortable they are letting go in front of others).

Learning Outcomes: 2 mins

By the end of the lesson, the student will be able to:

1. Let go of preconceived ideas of whether or not they "can act."
2. Reconnect with their faculty of wonder and play.
3. Start to build a connection with their ensemble.

Pre-assessment: 8 mins

Physical Background Knowledge Probe (CAT 1)

1. Have the students form a line crossing the middle of the room.
2. You will call out different activities related to theatre, film, and performance. With each one, the students should run to the left if they have done it, to the right if they haven't. If they are already on the appropriate side, they should do five jumping jacks.
 - If you have acted in a play before.
 - Been crew in a play.
 - Acted in a short film
 - If you have produced a play.
 - Written a script.
 - Been in a dance festival.
 - Music Recital.
 - *Modify and add to this list depending on the group.*
3. Now, call out feelings they may or may not have towards acting, have them go to the left if they agree, to the right if they disagree. They can stay in the middle if they're neutral or have no opinion.
 - I am an actor.
 - I am a performer.
 - Being on stage excites me.
 - Being on camera excites me.
 - I feel sick before I have to speak in public.
 - I feel at home when in front of an audience.

- *Modify and add to this list depending on the group.*

The purpose of this is to understand their backgrounds, all while getting them warm, active, and out of their heads. Laughter and giggles should be encouraged - allow them to feel whatever they are feeling. Make a note of attitudes and fears towards acting, as well as how many students have been involved in each activity and how, this will inform what content you bring to the next session.

Participatory Learning (Instructional activities)

30 mins

1. Student Activity: Group Environment (10 mins)¹
 - A. Split up into small groups (3-4 people per group)
 - B. One person will start a simple repetitive action to signify an environment, they can add sounds to their movement if they like.
 - For example: They might hold up a balloon, scan a product, spin pizza dough.
 - C. One by one, the other members of the group will join the environment, adding another feature in the same fashion: simple repetitive motions.
 - For example: A kid crying for the balloon, a person walking with their cart, a waiter yelling out an order.
 - D. They will present their creations to the group - no standing on ceremony and sitting down, simply have everyone turn around in their spots to look at each other's work.

Outcome: Recognize the safety and creativity possible in the ensemble, remove the pressure of standing out and being clever or funny in front of the group.

2. Yes, and... Game (10 mins)²
 - A. Split up into pairs, have the students decide who will be A and who will be B.
 - B. A will start off by suggesting they plan a surprise birthday party for their friend. B will say "no" to every suggestion, giving a reason for the negative answer.
 - C. A should keep insisting they plan it, adjusting their suggestion to the reasons B gives them.
 - For example: A- "Let's throw Maria a surprise birthday party!" B- "I don't think so, I don't like surprises." A- "Well, it won't be a surprise, but we can still plan an amazing party!" B- "Ugh, I hate planning parties..." and so on.
 - D. After a few minutes of this, ask them how it's going. Person A will probably be getting nowhere and might be getting frustrated. Let them voice that frustration.
 - E. Now, have person B make the same suggestion. This time, person A will respond: "Yes, but" and insert a reason.

¹"Improv Games for Collaboration," Theatre Folk: The Drama Teacher Resource Company, posted August 8, 2015, <https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/improv-games-for-collaboration/>.

² Charna Halpern, Del Close, and Kim "Howard" Johnson: *Truth in Comedy: The Manual of Improvisation* (Colorado Springs: Meriwether Publishing Ltd., 1952), 27-30.

- For example: B- "Let's throw Maria a surprise birthday party!" A- "Yes, but I don't know if we're going to be able to schedule it anytime soon, she's really busy." B- "We can check in with her roommate, she usually knows what she's up to." A- "Yes, but good luck finding her, she's been awol lately." and so on.
- F. Finally, have A start off the same way, and this time, B will answer enthusiastically and add an idea on to the party planning.
- For example: A- "Let's throw Maria a surprise birthday party!" B- "Yes! And let's get her a bunch of balloons!" A- "Yes, and a big three-tiered cake!" B- "And a DJ!" and so on.
- G. The third time around should feel dynamic, like it's moving forward, like the party they are planning will be the event of the century! Ask them how they felt each time around.

Outcome: Recognize the value of accepting and adding on to your partner's ideas, as well as realizing that creativity grows when working together.

3. Mind Meld (10 mins)³

- A. The whole group will stand in a circle.
- B. Two people will start by saying whatever word comes to mind at the same time.
- For example: Person A: Glasses. Person B: Ocean.
- C. The group must then find commonalities and think of a word that links the two previous ones.
- D. The first person to think of a word will say "One!" And raise their hand. The second person will raise their hand and say "Two!"
- E. They will look at each other and as if they were playing "Rock, Paper, Scissors" they will say "One, Two, (insert word)!"
- For example: Person C: "One, two, *Pollution!*" Person D: "One, two, *Beach!*"
- F. Now, two more people must make a connection, and so on, until both people find the same word.
- For example: Person E: "One, two, *Coral Reef!*" Person F: "One, two, *Coral Reef!*"
- G. Sometimes, the word will be so obvious that the whole group will want to say it, this is encouraged.

Outcome: Learn to make quick associations between seemingly unrelated words. Learn to think on their feet. Have a little fun.

Post-Assessment:

8 mins

Virtual Application Cards (CAT 24):

Instruct the students to take their phones out, and go to *Mentimeter* (insert specific url here).

³ *The Assembly MX*, in person class by Sara De Lille, El Barco, Mexico City, September 2019.

Anyone can Cook ACT!
-Chef Auguste Gusteau, Ratatouille

"We have spent most of today playing, essentially, but what we learn while engaging in these games can be applied elsewhere. Name three ways you think you could apply these games to your majors."

The answers will pop up as a word cloud on screen. Read their answers aloud as they pop up, if you - or they - have any initial reactions, note them so you can respond to them at the beginning of next class.

Summary/Close:

2 mins

Popcorn style, throw out a word describing how you felt when you got here.

Then: how are you feeling now?