

**Drama Unit Plan**  
**Improvisation (Story Theatre)**

**Gr. 8 Drama**

**Walt Disney Middle School**

**March 4-22, 2013**

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## **Rationale**

Drama is a way for individuals to be creative and expressive in a safe learning environment. It allows students to discover more of their identity through the exploration of various elements within drama as well as gaining confidence in that identity. It is important that students work well with one another having a positive supportive attitude in order that everyone can feel comfortable taking risks. At the beginning of the unit we will be spending a class doing warm-up and orientation games to create a community of learners.

Improvisation in the classroom will teach students how to make decisions quickly during games played, build spontaneous scenes, and understand the skills necessary in sharing narratives. Through this unit there will also be opportunity for students to learn spatial awareness both of their own bodies and those around them as we participate in activities involving movement.

Telling stories is a large part of many cultures, as well as in simple day to day life. By the end of this unit of Improvisation/Acting students will work towards self-assurance in sharing various forms of narratives, spontaneously and planned. Many areas of life require the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently, both being aspects that students will be studying in this Unit of Improv, ending with Story Theatre.

## Unit Objectives

### Orientation Skills:

- Students will demonstrate a responsible attitude toward physical and emotional safety and comfort of self and others.
- Participate positively in classroom activities.
- Listen effectively.
- Work cooperatively and productively with all members of the class in pairs, small groups, and large groups.
- Recognize and participate in warm-up activities.

### Improvisation Skills:

- Students will recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing, and blocking. I#13
- Students will use varied stimuli for character development. I#14
- Students will be able to use body and body language to enhance characterization. I#15
- Students will select and use language appropriate to a given character and situation. I#17
- Students will be able to enter and exit in character. I#20
- Students will be able to sustain a character throughout an exercise or scene. I#21
- Students will be able to create business appropriate to character and situation. I#22
- Students will recognize that relationships exist between characters in given situations. I#24
  
- Students will be able to create shapes with the body. M#14
- Students will be able to communicate environment, character, and situation non-verbally. M#25

## Unit Overview

### Lesson#1

TSW: Participate in warm-up activities safely, working towards building community.  
Group Discussion: about safety, Walking (Nodding, Greeting, High Fives, walking in a circle and matching speed), Breathing, Alliteration Name Game, Shootout, Stop Freeze, Naming Objects (Right & Wrong), Atom.  
*Orientation: 2, 5, 10, 14, 17 (Junior High)*

### Lesson #2

TSW: Participate in a small scene with no blocking or wimping.  
Walking (Nodding, Greeting, Accepting), Circle (Go over blocking, wimping, accepting, advancing), Yes And, Scenes with no wimping or blocking- only accepting.  
*Improvisation: 13, 15, 17 (Junior High)*

### Lesson #3

TSW: Create tableaus with their bodies to communicate stories.  
Walking, Breathing, Walking Freeze (Add in connections), Shapes and Levels Freeze, Alphabet Letters, Title Tableaus, Small Group Tableaus.  
*Improvisation: 13, 15 (Junior High)*  
*Movement: 13, 25 (Junior High)*

### Lesson #4

TSW: Successfully play the game, "Party Quirks."  
Walking, Where, Waiting For Charlie, Space Jump, Party Quirks  
*Improvisation: 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21 (Junior High)*

### Lesson #5

TSW: Successfully play the game "Join Me and Bring the Scene to Life."  
Warm-up (Review of advancing, characters), Conducted Story, Join Me, Join Me and Tell Me What You're Thinking, Join Me and Bring the Scene to Life.  
*Improvisation: 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22 (Junior High)*

### Lesson #6

TSW: Work towards playing the game, "Stories My Grandparents Told Me."  
Warm-up: Review advancing a scene, creating characters, and sequencing. One Word Stories, Telephone Charades, What Happens Next. Personal Adverts, Stories My Grandparents Told me.  
*Improvisation: 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24 (Junior High)*

## C & I Drama Improvisation Lesson #3 Plan

Name: Jolayne Mowers  
 Grade/Subject: Gr. 8 Drama  
 Topic: Tableaus  
 Length of Lesson: 40 min.

<b>General Learning Outcomes (P.O.S.)</b>	•To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic DISCIPLINES.	
<b>Specific Learning Outcomes (P.O.S.)</b>	Improvisation/Movement: -Students will be able to use body and body language to enhance characterization. -Students will be able to communicate environment, character, and situation non-verbally. -Students will be able to create shapes with the body.	
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	1. Students will create a five-six scene tableau in small groups. Skills needed: -Character development -Movement -Improvisation	
<b>Materials</b>	Drama Room	
<b>Procedure</b>		<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Introduction (5 min.)</b>	1. To begin class students will come in and gather in a large circle. We will briefly discuss and review the previous days lesson on advancing a scene. Students will then brainstorm on what tableaus are, as we will be working towards creating small tableau scenes by the end of class. 2. Walking: Students will begin walking around the room focusing on safety and not coming in contact with others (Add in: High Fives, Nodding, Handshakes). We will then move right into the activity, Breathing to change the size of the space students are walking in.	• Group discussion and review of advancing a scene, as well as describing Tableaus. • Observation of student participation as well as student safety. • Ask students: What advancing a scene means? What are tableaus?

<p><b>General Learning Outcomes (P.O.S.)</b></p>	<p>•To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic DISCIPLINES.</p>	
<p><b>Body (15 min.)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Walking Freeze- It will be explained that students will walk around the room, and when Freeze is called, they need to be connecting with another person (Variations: first connection must be a hand on someones shoulder, then switch to linking elbows, etc.)</li> <li>2. After students has mastered safely connecting with someone else when Freeze is called, we will move into the game, Shapes and Levels Freeze to work on how bodies can create different images. Students will choose a partner and once again begin walking randomly around the room. The first round will start out with the students need to create levels with their partners, when Freeze is called they must first find their partner and then each be in a different level while frozen. The second round will be similar but instead with the students freezing in a shape such as, curved, twisted, or straight.</li> <li>3. Alphabet Letters- Students will then be divided into groups of 4. Each round a letter will be called out and students must create that letter with their bodies, using everyone in the group. We will do a few rounds and then come together as a group to discuss the purpose of playing games such as Shapes and Levels Freeze, as well as Alphabet Letters.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of student participation/safety.</li> <li>• Discussion about the reasons for doing the activities</li> </ul>

Procedure		Assessment
<b>Body (15 min.)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Title Tableaus- Students will spread out in the room. A title will be called out such as, athlete or teacher, and students will form a position or action that reflects that title.</li> <li>2. Small Group Tableaus- In groups of 3 or 4 students will have the chance to create a small story through the use of tableaus. They will be given time to work on their tableaus for approximately 8-10 min. They will be required to have 5-6 pictures in their tableaus to express their story.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of students who are listening and following directions.</li> <li>• Observation of students working with one another in groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Closure (5 min.)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ending class, the groups will take turns presenting their finished pieces. Once the tableau has been presented, the rest of the class will try and explain the story that was shown.</li> <li>2. Students will then come together and discuss the challenges of telling a story using only their bodies.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of tableaus.</li> <li>• Discussion of the challenges of non-verbal story telling.</li> </ul>

Reflection:



## C & I Drama Improvisation Lesson #4 Plan

Name: Jolayne Mowers  
Grade/Subject: Gr. 8 Drama  
Topic: Characterization  
Length of Lesson: 40 min.

<b>General Learning Outcomes (P.O.S.)</b>	•To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic DISCIPLINES.
<b>Specific Learning Outcomes (P.O.S.)</b>	Improvisation: -Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing and blocking. -Use varied stimuli for character development. -Enter and exit in character.
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	1. Students will play the game Party Quirks Skills needed: -Character development -Setting -Entrance/Exits -Improvisation
<b>Materials</b>	Drama Room Chairs

Procedure		Assessment
<b>Introduction (5 min.)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will come in and after everyone is seated in a circle, it will be explained that today we will be working towards playing an improvisation game called, "Party Quirks." As a group we will discuss the skills that they think might be helpful for improvisation.</li> <li>2. Activity #1: Walking- As a warm-up to start the lesson off students will be asked to simply walk around the room not touching anyone else. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Variations will be introduced such as, nodding, high fives, greeting one another by name.</li> <li>-Continuing walking, a number will be called and students will be required to get into groups of that number.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Activity #2: Where- After a few rounds of forming groups by number, students will then be required to also form a location in their groups. A number will be called, and then also a location. In their groups students will create that location with their bodies, and freeze.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussion about improvisation</li> <li>• Observation of students as they participate in walking around the room.</li> <li>• Observation of student participation in the activity "Where."</li> </ul>

Procedure		Assessment
<p><b>Body (15 min.)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Activity #2: Waiting for Charlie- Students will be asked to form small groups of either 3 or 4. For this game one person will stand to the side while the other group members sit on the chairs which represent a bus stop or seating area in some location. The students on the bench will begin describing their friend “Charlie” (the person standing on the side). After each person has given a piece of descriptive information about who/what Charlie is like, the person who has been waiting on the side will come into the scene as Charlie. They must characterize the previous descriptions given about Charlie. Each student will take a turn as “Charlie.”</li> <li>2. Students will come together in a large circle and there will be time of reviewing the basics of improvisation. With a partner to their left or right, students will go over: blocking, accepting, advancing and wimping, within a short scene.</li> <li>3. Activity #3: Bus Stop- After our time of review, students will divide into different groups, 4 students per group, and practice entrances and exits with the game Bus Stop. There will be two chairs side by side and one student will begin by sitting on one of the chairs and creating a character. Another student will come and have a seat at the bus stop as their own character, and begin a conversation. Each student should try and pick different characters or opposites of the person already on the bench. The first person on the bench will eventually leave the bus stop, and another student with a new character will join. It continues until all students have come and gone from the bus stop.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe each student participating in “Waiting for Charlie.”</li> <li>• Ask students to explain the aspects of an improv scene: blocking, accepting, advancing, wimping, and then practice each.</li> <li>• Observe students ability to follow directions and successful carry out the activities.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Body Continued (15 min.)</b></p>	<p>6. Activity #4: Space Jump- Moving right into this next activity, students will be asked to walk around the room and then when FREEZE is called, divided into groups of 3-4 with whoever is closet to them. Students will be asked to label themselves: A/B/C/D. In that order students will enter and create a scene. Student A will begin, and when ready student B will call freeze and switch the scene based on the position A is holding. C and D will then do the same thing when they enter changing the scene based on the positions A and B are holding. Then once everyone has entered it will go into reverse, until person A is left in their original scene.</p> <p>7. Activity #5: Party Quirks- Characters, entrances, and improvisation, all will be required during this game. One student is the host of a party, they will leave the room while the other group members decide who they are going to be as guest- becoming certain characters or having a trait of some sort. The host will return and one at a time the guests will come to the party during which the host must figure out who each person is portraying, or the quirk they have. Depending on time, each group member will take a turn at being the host.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe student participation.</li> <li>• Observe student's ability to effectively portray a character.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Closure (5 min.)</b></p>	<p>Finishing the lesson, students will be asked to come together in a large circle to discuss the activities. Students will be asked to talk about the skills each game focused on leading up to Party Quirks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with students the purpose of each activity leading up to Party Quirks.</li> </ul>

Reflection:

## Assessment

Forms of Assessment:

- Observation of participation, and safety during activities.
- Group discussions:  
Discuss how characters can be expressed through movement.  
Discuss what skills different activities build upon.  
Discuss how to tell a story effective, such as the elements within a story.  
Discuss with a partner what it means to: block, wimp, accept, advance.  
Discuss the challenges of creating a story non-verbally through the use of bodies only.
- Think-Pair-Shares
- Exit Slips  
Explain why storytelling is an important skill beyond the Drama classroom.  
Give one positive from today's lesson and then one way it could be improved.
- Checklists:

<b>Student has demonstrated:</b>	
The ability to work safely with others.	
The ability to create a picture with their body.	
How to advance a scene without blocking, or wimping.	
The ability to listen and follow instructions.	
Following the sequence in creating a story.	
Creating a character describes to them by classmates in the game, Waiting for Charlie.	

## Resources

Alberta Curriculum Support. (1989). *Teacher Resource Manual: Drama Junior High School*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

*Improv Encyclopedia*. (2013). <http://improvcyclopedia.org>

*Drama Toolkit*. (2010). <http://www.dramatoolkit.co.uk>