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# **Improvisation and Dramatic Process Unit**

**Drama 30**

**March 11-15, 2013**

**Crescent Heights High School**

**Megan Henze**

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### **Rationale**

The focus of this unit is on improvisation and creation through dramatic process. The Alberta Learning High School Drama Program of Studies states “Drama is both an art form and a medium for learning and teaching”. The purpose of Drama is to foster an appreciation for art and creativity in students. This unit will encourage students to understand the importance of drama by allowing them to be expressive and innovative.

*“Imagination is more important than knowledge”*

-Albert Einstein

### **Unit Objective**

In this unit, the students will create a ten minute thematic scene in group of 4-5 through improvisation and dramatic process.

*“Improvisation is the ‘acting out’ of an unscripted response to an idea or situation. Spontaneous improvisation involves unplanned action and/or dialogue. Planned improvisation involves planned, rehearsed or polished action and/or dialogue.”*

-Alberta Learning, High School Drama  
Program of Studies

## **Unit Outcomes**

### **Previous Outcomes**

#### **Drama 10**

*The student will be able to:*

1. Use warm-up techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind.
2. Demonstrate the ability to be still.
3. Maintain concentration during exercises.
4. Demonstrate heightened sensory awareness.
5. Create experiences through imaging, visualizing and fantasizing.
6. Demonstrate thinking in a divergent mode.
7. Examine and express feelings.
8. Tell a story spontaneously.
9. Use appropriate stage directions.
10. Demonstrate appropriate rehearsal methods.
11. Apply the essential elements of a story: character, setting, conflict, climax and plot in planned and unplanned scenes.
12. Create, relate and polish a story.
13. Communicate meaning without words.
14. Discover how various emotions affect one vocally and physically.
15. Initiate a dramatic situation in response to a given stimulus.
16. Make logical choices spontaneously within the boundaries of situation and character.
17. Demonstrate the ability to accept, advance, offer or block thought and action, quickly and effectively.
18. Extend the illusion of the onstage environment by creating an offstage reality.
19. Demonstrate techniques for creating effective entrances and exits, consistent with character.
20. Critique the work of self and others through observation and expression of specific detail.
21. Demonstrate techniques for communicating the “illusion of the first time” within a planned situation.
22. Distinguish between performer and character.
23. Use varied stimuli for character development.
24. Select and use vocal techniques appropriate to a character.
25. Select and use language appropriate to a character and situation.

26. Use body language to add physical dimension and depth to a character.
27. Demonstrate economy in movement and speech by making appropriate selections.
28. Demonstrate how attitude, and change in attitude, affects a character.
29. Demonstrate understanding of and apply the concept of status.
30. Demonstrate understanding of and apply the concepts of a character's objectives and motivation.
31. Demonstrate the ability to focus on, and achieve, the objective of a scene.
32. Sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise.

### Drama 20

*The student will be able to:*

33. Sustain a single character in a variety of situations.
34. Demonstrate the techniques of sharing, giving and taking focus.
35. Demonstrate understanding of how the use of levels and planes can focus the stage picture.
36. Integrate improvisational skills learned, in planned and spontaneous improvisations.

### **Current Unit Outcomes**

#### Drama 30

*The student will be able to:*

37. Demonstrate various ways of expressing emotions that are consistent with a character.
38. Demonstrate various ways of creating and communicating mood.

### **Unit Skills**

- Cooperation
- Creativity
- Appropriate mood expression
- Appropriate Audience skills
- Performance skills

## Unit Overview

### Lesson 1

**TSW:**

**Play Walk like..., Alphabet story, create a Tableaux, play Party Quirks, engage in Discussion/ Closure**

*Improvisation (High School) 1, 8, 16, 33, 37*

**Formative Assessment #2**

### Lesson 2

**TSW:**

**Perform an Infomercial for a random object, engage in Discussion/ Closure**

*Improvisation (High School) 6, 10, 15, 23, 36*

**Formative Assessment #1**

### Lesson 3

**TSW:**

**Perform a mood improv, engage in Discussion/ Closure**

*Improvisation (High School) 4, 15, 16, 38*

**Formative Assessment #1**

### Lesson 4

**TSW:**

**Rehearse for their final project**

*Improvisation (High School) 10*

**Formative Assessment #2**

### Lesson 5

**TSW:**

**Perform their final project according to the criteria set out in the rubric**

*Improvisation (High School) 1- 38*

**Summative Assessment #1**

## Materials

- Drama room
- Class set of chairs
- Soccer ball
- Odds and ends (ex. Oversized Tweezers, Fork, Tangle, Number Swatter, Fidget toy, String ball etc.)
- Coloured cotton swabs + container for sorting

- Handout with performance checklist
- Handout with performance rubric
- Lighting and Music equipment

### Sample Lesson 1

#### **Lesson Plan: Improv**

**Name:** Megan Henze **Grade:** 10 **Subject:** Drama **Unit/ Topic:** Improv **Time:** 40 minutes **Date:** March 11, 2013

#### **GLOs**

*Students will:*

- Develop an appreciation of drama and theatre as a process and an art form.

#### **SLOs**

*Students will:*

- Use warmup techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind.
- Tell a story spontaneously.
- Sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise.

#### **Learning Objectives**

*Students will:*

- Play Party Quirks
- Demonstrate characterization while playing Party Quirks

#### **Learning Resources Consulted**

Alberta Learning Program of Studies

#### **Materials**

Drama room

Chairs (class set)

Soccer ball

#### **Procedure**

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Attention Grabber/ Hook:** As the students sit in a circle, have them play a short round of Categories: Give the students a category of your choosing (Food, Countries, TV shows, etc. The students could also choose the category but in the interest of time, the teacher should pick it in this case). The person who starts, has the soccer ball, they say any letter of the alphabet out loud, then throw the soccer ball to someone else in the circle (after making eye contact!). The person who receives the soccer ball must come up with a word that starts with the letter that also falls under the

proper category. They must do this within a specific time frame set out prior to beginning (3 second, for example) or that player is out. This player then selects a new letter of the alphabet and the game continues like this until everyone but one person is out, or until time has run out, if it's just a short warm up.

- Advance Organizer:
  - Walk like...
  - Alphabet story
  - Tableaux
  - Party Quirks
  - Discussion/ Closure
- Transition to Body: Inform the class that today we will be playing Party Quirks

### Body (30 minutes)

#### Activity #1 (5 minutes)

- Have the class walk around the room at a comfortable pace.
- Instruct them to walk in certain ways: SAY: *Walk like a gorilla* or *walk like you just stubbed your toe* etc.
- After a few minutes, have the students get into groups of three for the next activity.

#### Activity #2 (5minutes)

- SAY: *Now we will be playing a game called letters.*
- With the students standing in a circle, I will select a letter of the alphabet. The next person in the circle will say a sentence that starts with a word that starts with the letter I chose. The next person will say a sentence that starts with a word that starts with the next letter of the alphabet. This goes on until all 26 letters have been done. If a student hesitates then he or she is out. SAY: *The point of this exercise is to tell a story spontaneously, so it is more important to stick to the story and get "out" than it is to quickly and randomly come up with a sentence that doesn't fit.*

#### Activity #3 (10 minutes)

- In groups of three, give students five minutes to come up with a frozen scene, or tableau, that uses all three people, that other students will be able to guess what they are doing.
- After five minutes, go around the room and have each group of three show their tableaux, while the other students offer suggestions of what the scene is of.

#### Activity #4 (10 minutes)

- Party Quirks: Have the students stand in a circle and number them 1-4. 1's will be the party hosts, or guessers, and 2-4's will be the party guests.
- The 1's will leave the room, while the 2-4's will come up with characters they can be.
- 1's will reenter and the party will begin with one group going at a time and the rest of the class being the audience. The 1's must try to guess what characters the 2-4's are portraying.



- Once the 1's have guessed, they will be rotated out and a new set of 1-4's will have their party. This will continue until everyone has gone.

#### Closure (5 minutes)

- In their groups of 4, have students discuss the following questions that will be written on the whiteboard or SmartBoard:
  - How did the activities we did today prepare us for playing Party Quirks?
  - Why is it important to have a set character when performing improv?

#### **Sponge Activity**

- Another round of Alphabet story.

#### **Assessment**

- Checklist: check off that each student participates in Party Quirks and effectively demonstrates characterization

#### **Reflection**

### Sample Lesson 2

#### **Lesson Plan: Dramatic Commercials**

**Name:** Megan Henze **Grade:** 10 **Subject:** Drama **Topic:** Improv **Duration:** 40min **Date:** March 12, 2013

#### **GLOs**

*Students will:*

- Develop an appreciation of drama and theatre as a process and an art form.

#### **SLOs**

*Students will:*

- Sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise.
- Integrate improvisational skills learned, in planned and spontaneous improvisations.
- Demonstrate understanding of and apply the concepts of a character's objectives and motivation.

#### **Learning Objectives**

*Students will:*

- Perform a two minute infomercial with limited rehearsal

## **Materials**

Odds and ends (ex. Oversized Tweezers, Fork, Tangle, Number Swatter, Fidget toy, String ball etc.)

Coloured cotton swabs + container for sorting

Handout with performance checklist

## **Procedure**

### Introduction (5 minutes)

- Attention Grabber: Play the Shamwow commercial on the SmartBoard (found on YouTube under "Shamwow (Full Length)") Put students into groups while the video is playing by having each student blindly pick a coloured cotton swab from my hand.
- Separate the students based on the colour Q-tip they drew
- Give each group one handout so they can follow along with the assignment.

### Body (30 minutes)

#### Activity #1- (5 minutes)

- Have a student volunteer read the explanation to the class on the Criteria Checklist handout.
- Go around the room to each group with the 'magic bag of useless paraphernalia' where each group will pick an object.
- Announce that the groups have about 15 minutes to create their infomercial for the object they have selected. They can chose whatever function for the object they desire.

#### Activity #2- (15 minutes)

- Allow 15 minutes for the groups to create their commercial.
- Circulate the classroom to ensure students are staying on task, and be available for questions

#### Activity #3- (10 minutes)

- Have the students sit with their group members
- Observe each group's commercial while checking off the criteria checklist.

### Closure (5 minutes)

- Ask: *How did this exercise relate to improv and dramatic process?*

## **Sponge Activity**

- (Before closure if there is extra time) Show the Hercules (1997) Movie Trailer on YouTube if there is more than 1:32 left
- "What are some similarities and differences of TV commercials and Movie Trailers?"

## **Assessment**

- Checklist for infomercial criteria

## **Reflection**

**Unit Differentiation Plan**

**Assessment**

**Formative Assessment**

**#1**

| <b>DRAMA PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST</b>                          |   |
|---|---|
| Name: _____ Class: _____                                    |   |
| <b>Criteria</b>   |   |
| <b>VOICE</b>  | Voice was loud and clear; words were easily understood                              |
| <b>BLOCKING</b>   | Good use of stage and movement—did not turn back to audience                        |
| <b>SCRIPT/<br/>PURPOSE</b><br>(When applicable)             | Enticing vivid detail used in script/dialogue; evident reasons for the performance. |
| <b>MEMORIZATION/<br/>IMPROVISATION</b><br>(When applicable) | Script was fully memorized; student improvised in place of lines.                   |
| <b>FACIAL EXPRESSION/<br/>BODY LANGUAGE</b>                 | Great use of gestures, facial expression and body movement!                         |
| Additional Comments:  |   |

**#2**

| <b>EXIT SLIP</b>  |
|---|
| Write two things you learned about improv in today's class:<br>1.<br><br>2. |

Write one thing you would like to learn about improv next class:  
1.

**Summative Assessment**

**#1**

**DRAMA PERFORMANCE RUBRIC**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

| Criteria  | 4   | 3  | 2  | 1   | TOTAL |
|---|---|--|--|---|-------|
| <b>VOICE</b>  | Voice was loud and clear; words were easily understood                              | Student spoke clearly but it was difficult to understand some of the script; could've been louder. | Voice and language was not very clear; could've been much louder.      | Could not understand what was being said due to unclear and low speech. |       |
| <b>BLOCKING</b>   | Good use of stage and movement—did not turn back to audience                        | Almost used entire stage—turned away from audience only once or twice.                             | Could have used more of the stage; must concentrate on facing forward. | Needed more blocking—always face audience and use the stage!            |       |
| <b>SCRIPT/<br/>PURPOSE</b><br>(When applicable)             | Enticing vivid detail used in script/dialogue; evident reasons for the performance. | Script/dialogue was well-written; considerable detail with good purpose.                           | Some detail used in script/dialogue; needed more of a purpose.         | Script/dialogue contained no purpose and very little detail.            |       |
| <b>MEMORIZATION/<br/>IMPROVISATION</b><br>(When applicable) | Script was fully memorized; student improvised in place of lines.                   | Script was almost fully memorized—some improv used to make up for missed lines.                    | Script was partially memorized; student did not attempt improvisation. | Script was not at all memorized; no improvisation used.                 |       |
| <b>FACIAL<br/>EXPRESSION/<br/>BODY LANGUAGE</b>             | Great use of gestures, facial expression and body movement!                         | Contained some facial expression, gestures & body movement.  | Needed more facial expressions gestures & movement.                    | Contained little to no facial expression, gesture or movement.          |       |

**Final Grade: /20**

Additional Comments:

**Appendix A**

**Sponge Activity**

**Zip Bong:**

Students will sit in a circle. One person will start with the word “zip” and they will move their head to the right. The person to the right will then say either “zip” or “bong”. If they say “zip”, play continues to the right until someone else says “bong”. If they say “bong” they move their head to the left and then the direction of play changes until someone else says “bong”.

### **Appendix B**

#### **Games/Activities for Unit:**

##### **Alphabet Story:**

The students sit in a circle. One student begins a story with a word beginning with a given letter of the alphabet. The student will then pass the ball to another student, who must continue the story with a word that begins with the next letter of the alphabet. This continues until all 26 letters have been said.

##### **Mood Improv:**

In partners, the students perform a neutral scene in a mood that is improvised given the type of lighting/ sound cues provided by the teacher

##### **Party Quirks:**

One player plays a character that is having a party. The other players will be the guests, and the audience provides us with who the guests might be. Of course the host does not know who the guests are. His task is to guess who the guests might be, based on hints the guests offer. The game is over as soon as the host has guessed all guests.

##### **Walk Like...:**

Players walk around the room, imitating something suggested by the teacher. (Animals, Cars, Types of people, etc.)

### **Bibliography**

Alberta Learning High School Drama Program of Studies

Improvisation Encyclopedia: <http://improvencyclopedia.org/games/index.html>

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