

# **Improvisation**

## **Grade Eight- Drama**

### ***Alexandra Junior High- Introductory Drama***

**March 8<sup>th</sup> –March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

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# Table of Contents

1. Rationale.....	Page 3
2. Unit Objective and Skills.....	Page 4
3. Unit Overview.....	Pages 5-6
4. Sample Lessons.....	Pages 7-10
5. Assessment .....	Pages 11-12
6. Bibliography .....	Page 13

# Rationale

By teaching our students about theatre we are inadvertently teaching them about life. Within theatre you get to build on numerous aspects to create a better rounded character or design. By teaching our students to be better rounded in the theatre world we are also teaching them to be better rounded individuals. We are able to teach them to be team players and to respect one another in the classroom. As teachers we provide a safe place for them to express themselves and be creative.

Improvisation is an essential component of the drama curriculum. It helps to set the foundation for all other aspects of theatre. By enabling students to think out of the box and try new things that they might otherwise be afraid to try it fosters the positive self concept instated by the TRM. By allowing students to take on a different persona you are allowing them to build and work on their characterization. Students also learn about the parts of a scene or script and how to make sure that it has a distinct conflict. Within improvisation you also learn about character foils. Improvisation also helps students learn how to think on their feet.

I have chosen to create a unit that embodies characterization, narration and thinking on the spot. I believe a great way to do so is to provide my students with the basics and see where it takes them. Therefore, I am going to do a number of lessons to work on the basic skills with the end goal being a Saturday Night Live type of performance. This will allow the students to collaborate and use the games that they enjoyed best and put them to use in a final seven minute performance. This performance will not only help them get over their nerves but will help them when speaking in front of others by teaching them to speak clearly and with confidence.

# Unit Objective and Skills

## *Objective*

- The students will be able to improvise a seven minute scene similar to Saturday Night Live; by using the games that we learn about in class.

## *Skills*

- Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing and blocking.
  - Specific Learning Objective #13
  - Lessons 1-7
- Use varied stimuli for character development
  - Specific Learning Objective #14
  - Lessons 3-7
- Use the body and body language to enhance characterization.
  - Specific Learning Objective #15
  - Lessons 2-7
- Use voice variety to enhance a character.
  - Specific Learning Objective #18
  - Lessons 2, 4, 6, and 7
- Enter and exit in character.
  - Specific Learning Objective #20
  - Lessons 2, 4-7
- Create business appropriate to character and situation.
  - Specific Learning Objective #22
  - Lessons 3-7
- Recognize that character relationships exist between characters in given situations.
  - Specific Learning Objective #24
  - Lessons 1, 3-7
- Demonstrate understanding of focus and the processes of sharing, giving and taking.
  - Specific Learning Objective #25
  - Lessons 1-7

# Unit Overview

## ***Lesson One***

- **TSW be able to improv a scene with accepting, wimping but no blocking.**
  - Safety Review. Walk. Accepting. Blocking. Wimping. Build with more people. Short scene with 3 or 4 people (no blocking or you get removed from the scene).
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 24, and 25.*

## ***Lesson Two***

- **TSW be able to argue and makeup.**
  - Walk. Walk in character. Polar Opposites. Reason to Exit (groups of three). Small group arguments. Large group arguments. Argue and Makeup. Quick Quiz.
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 15, 18, 20, and 25.*

## ***Lesson Three***

- **TSW be able to play Hey You Down There!**
  - Review. Walk. Walk in Different Characters. This is Not a Chair. Mad Libs. Hey You Down There.
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 14, 15, 22, 24, and 25.*

## ***Lesson Four***

- **TSW play Story of the Grandparents.**
  - Walk. Mirrors. Pruii. Marco Polo. Ding. Story of the Grandparents.
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 25.*

## ***Lesson Five***

- **TSW play Party Quirks.**
  - Walk. Review. Waiting for Charlie. Where. Bus Stop. Blind Freeze. Party Quirks.
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 24, and 25.*

## ***Lesson Six***

- **TSW be prepared to present their Saturday Night Live set the following day.**
  - Review previous day's games. Rehearsal time. Final questions/ reflection.
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 25.*

## ***Lesson Seven***

- **TSW perform a seven minute improvisation set similar to Saturday Night Live.**
  - Review of previous day's rehearsal. Performances (5 groups of 5). Reflection.
  - *Improvisation (Junior High) SLO's- 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 25.*

# Sample Lesson Plans

## *Improvisation Lesson #1*

### **General Learning Outcome:**

- *Students will* acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

### **Specific Learning Outcome:**

- **Grade Eight:**
  - Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing, and blocking.
  - Recognize that relationships exist between characters in given situations.
  - Demonstrate understanding of focus and the processes of sharing, giving and taking.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- **Students will:**
  - Be able to improv a scene with the use of accepting and wimping but not blocking.

### **Materials and Equipment:**

- The Drama Room!

### **Learning Activity:**

- Get students to walk safely around the room.
  - Add in Nod, Handshakes and High Fives
  - Make sure that students are using each other's names throughout the handshakes and high fives.
  - Students walk in different animals and characters.
- Accepting
  - Get students to work on saying yes to each other in small groups of two and eventually building up to larger groups.
- Blocking
  - Get students to work on saying no to each other in small groups of two and eventually building into larger groups.
- Define Building
- No Blocking Improv
  - Student's improv a scene in groups of four or five. If a student blocks a scene they automatically have to leave and will get placed by the teacher in the new scene aka someone else's group.
- Stretch and Walk

**Assessment Techniques:** I will assess the students formatively on how well they can listen to directions and participate with the other students. As well how well they can get a grasp on blocking, accepting and wimping.

**Key Questions:**

- Describe Blocking, Accepting, Wimping.
- How can you make your character more interesting?
- How can we build this scene?

**Reflection:**



## ***Improvisation Lesson #5***

### **General Learning Outcome:**

- *Students will* acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

### **Specific Learning Outcome:**

- **Grade Eight:**
  - Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing and blocking.
  - Use varied stimuli for character development
  - Use the body and body language to enhance characterization.
  - Use voice variety to enhance a character.
  - Enter and exit in character.
  - Create business appropriate to character and situation.
  - Recognize that character relationships exist between characters in given situations.
  - Demonstrate understanding of focus and the processes of sharing, giving and taking.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- **Students will:**
  - Be able to play Party Quirks.

### **Materials and Equipment:**

- The Drama Room!

### **Learning Activity:**

- Get students to walk safely around the room.
  - Add in Nod, Handshakes and High Fives
  - Make sure that students are using each other's names throughout the handshakes and high fives.
  - Students walk in different animals and characters.
- Review: Blocking, Accepting and Wimping.
  - Class discussion.
- Waiting for Charlie
  - Students pretend to be looking for Charlie at a bus station.
  - Students give hints by describing him.
- Where

- Students have to create a location with their bodies.
- Bus Stop
  - Students pretend to be waiting at a bus stop.
  - 2/3/4/5 People.
- Blind Freeze
  - Students act out the scene starting with two people and the caller switches people out and adding people in until the last person wraps up the scene in one sentence.
- PARTY QUIRKS
  - The party host goes out of the room the other three people are given characters to be. Party host comes back in and has to guess who the guests are as they come in one by one.
- Stretch and Walk

**Assessment Techniques:** I will assess the students formatively on how well they can listen to directions and participate with the other students. As well how well they can get a grasp on character, setting, improv, entrances/exits.

**Key Questions:**

- Describe Blocking, Accepting, Wimping.
- How can you make your character more interesting?
- How can we build this scene?

**Reflection:**

# Assessment

## Lesson Two- Quick Quiz

- *SLO's*
  - Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing, and blocking.
  - Use the body and body language to enhance characterization.
- *Example*
  1. In class, we talked about the three building blocks of improvisation. The first two are accepting and blocking. The third is?
    - a) Set
    - b) Foiling
    - c) Wimping
    - d) Center Staging

## Lesson Five- Check List

- *SLO's*
  - Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing and blocking.
  - Use varied stimuli for character development
  - Use the body and body language to enhance characterization.
  - Enter and exit in character.
  - Create business appropriate to character and situation.
  - Recognize that character relationships exist between characters in given situations.
  - Demonstrate understanding of focus and the processes of sharing, giving and taking.
- *Example*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student enters and exits in character.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student demonstrates accepting while in character.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student uses their body to enhance their character.

## Lesson Six- Exit Slips

- Students are able to voice any questions or concerns they might have.
- *Example*
  - In today's class we worked on our Saturday Night Light set's, is there any questions or concerns you may have regarding your performance tomorrow?

## Lesson Seven- Check List

- *SLO's*
  - Recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing and blocking.
  - Use varied stimuli for character development
  - Use the body and body language to enhance characterization.
  - Use voice variety to enhance a character.
  - Enter and exit in character.
  - Create business appropriate to character and situation.
  - Recognize that character relationships exist between characters in given situations.
  - Demonstrate understanding of focus and the processes of sharing, giving and taking.
- *Example*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student demonstrates offering, accepting or advancing.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student is able to use stimuli to enhance character and is able to respond accordingly.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student is able to use their body and voice to enhance their character.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student enters and exits in character and responds appropriately to other characters.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Student demonstrates giving and taking.

# Bibliography

- **Alberta Junior High Drama Curriculum**

. "<http://education.alberta.ca/media/313010/jhdrama.pdf>." . N.p.. Web. 5 Feb 2013.