

Improv Your Life: Beginning Improv
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Table of Contents

WS Section I Map, Calendar, Content and Learning Outcomes	3
WS Section II Description of Setting	7
WS Section III Unit Goals, Standards, Lesson Objectives	14
WS Section IV Lesson Plans, Supporting Materials	26
WS Section V Pre-Assessment, Post-Assessment, Answer Keys, Rubric	60
WS Section VI Analysis of Pre-Assessment, Analysis of Post-Assessment, Graphs	66
Understanding by Design	71
Additional Requirements	
Pre, guided, or post reading or writing activity	42
Math	51
Technology	28
Rubric	57

Work Sample I
Planning Process

Planning Map

Lesson One: Basics of Improvisation

Show a clip of live, professional improv.

Take pre-test

Give definition of what it means to improv and different types of improv.

Name a few famous improvisers (Will Ferrell, Amy Poehler, Steve Carrell, etc.).

Provide and briefly discuss rules of good improv.

Stretching

Yes, And game

Lesson Two: First Three Rules

Stretching

Play quick warm-up game (Samurai).

Discuss most important rule of improv: Always Say Yes. Follow with exercises.

Review Yes And

Play Accepting Circle

Once Upon a Time

Talk about games

Discuss second rule of improv: Who, What, Where. Follow with exercises

3 Lines

Alphabet Game

Doors

Discuss where we succeeded and where we failed in the game while discovering possible ways to improve next time.

Discuss third rule of improv: Do Something. Follow with exercises.

Freeze

Crisis Situation

Change

Wrap-up review of first three rules

Homework: Bring t-shirts to use as blindfolds for Blind Lead next class.

Lesson Three: Three More Rules

NY Times article on UCB

Stretching

Play quick warm-up game (Greetings).

Discuss fourth rule of improv: Trust Your Partner. Follow with exercises.

Trust falls

Blind Lead

Talk about any discoveries that may have been made.

Discuss fifth rule of improv: Don't Explain, Show. Follow with exercises.

What Happens Next

He Said She Said

Fast Forward

Analyze each scene's strengths and weaknesses.

Discuss sixth rule of improv: Don't Plan. Follow with exercises.

Surprise Movement

Blind Line Offers

Emotional Family

Discuss how exercises went.

Lesson Four: Last Three Rules

Stretching

Play quick warm-up game (Odd One Out).

Discuss seventh rule of improv: Don't Fight. Follow with exercises.

Leave for a Reason

Commercial

Call from Charlie

Talk about what we observed during the scenes.

Discuss eighth rule of improv: Make Statements. Follow with exercises.

Without Question

Who Where Why Am I

Have a conversation about the exercises.

Discuss ninth rule of improv: HAVE FUN!

Make More Interesting

Typewriter

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly Advice

Assign performance order for the final performance for the next class.

Lesson Five: Putting it Together

Test

Stretching

Play quick warm up game (Doors).

Bring Mrs. Smith's class in to watch performance.

Students perform the following exercises:

Freeze

Call from Charlie

Fast Forward

Who Where Why Am I

Emotional Family

Typewriter

Change

Discuss how improv unit went.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1: Intro and Basics	OFF	Lesson 2: Rules 1-3	OFF	Lesson 3: Rules 4-6 (start)
Lesson 3: Additional warmup + Rules 4-6 (finish)	OFF	Lesson 4: Rules 7-9 (start)	OFF	Lesson 4: Additional warmup + Rules 7-9 (finish)
Lesson 5: Putting it together				

Lesson Outcomes:

After this unit, students will know the basic rules of improv. From doing multiple exercises, they will have a solid foundation for building scenes and partner work. They should feel confident to step onstage, accept that they don't know what will happen, and embrace the uncertainty. By making themselves vulnerable onstage during class, students will have strengthened their trust in their peers and have the ability to collaborate with each other on other projects. Because they have proven to themselves that they and their partners are enough all on their own (without a plan), the students will be able to trust their instincts and take this with them into scripted acting. Students will understand that many of the rules in improvisation can apply to their everyday lives, such as “Always Say Yes”, “Trust Your Partner”, “Do Something”, and “Have Fun”.

Work Sample II
Description of Setting

Community: Greeley, CO

- Demographics
 - 46.55 square miles
 - Population (2012): 95,357
 - People under 18 years: 25.8%
 - People over 65 years: 10.7%
 - White: 59.3%
 - Hispanic/Latino: 36.0%
 - African American: 1.7%
 - Two or more races: 3.4%
 - Foreign-born: 11%
 - Language other than English spoken at home: 24.1%
 - Housing units: 36,323
 - Home ownership rate: 57.1%
 - Median household income: \$44,226
 - Persons below poverty level: 23.5%
- Occupation and labor statistics
 - Unemployment rate: 6.1 % (7,600)
 - Farming: 11.6%
 - Mining, logging, and construction: 13.3%
 - Manufacturing: 11.7%
 - Trade, transportation, and utilities: 15.8%
 - Information: .6%
 - Financial activities: 4%
 - Professional and business services: 8.4%
 - Education and health services: 8.5%
 - Leisure and hospitality: 7.3%
 - Government: 16.4%
- Opportunities for community involvement
 - Downtown Greeley
 - Ice Haus
 - Restaurants
 - Shopping
 - Union Colony Civic Center
 - Family FunPlex
 - Farmers Market
 - Greeley Recreation Center
 - Island Grove Park
 - Golfing
 - Jesus Rodarte Center
 - Museums
 - Poudre River Trail
 - Boys and Girls Club
 - University of Northern Colorado
 - Weld County Food Bank

- Greeley-Evans School District 6
 - 20,382 students from Greeley and Evans
 - 25 public schools, 5 charter schools, and 1 online academy
 - Over 50 different languages represented
 - 59% Hispanic, 35% white, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% African American, 2% multiracial, 1% American Indian
 - 64% of students qualify for reduced-price or free meals
 - 80% of students graduate on time
 - 49% of teachers have a master's degree
 - Career pathway programs
 - Architecture
 - Arts magnet
 - Construction
 - Criminal justice
 - Culinary arts
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Fire science
 - Health science
 - International Baccalaureate
 - Marine Corps JROTC
 - Science Technology Engineering Math Academy (STEM)
 - Teacher education

School: Greeley West High School

- 2401 35th Avenue, Greeley, CO 80634 – one central building with 3 external classroom units, 2 gymnasiums, an auditorium, and a horticulture space
- Grades 9-12
- 1,464 students
- 9 administrators, 82 teachers, 6 counselors
- 1:21 teacher-student ratio
- 563 students eligible for free lunch (38%)
- Demographics
 - Hispanic: 52%
 - White: 41%
 - Asian: 3%
 - African American: 2%
 - Two or more races: 1%
- 2013-2014 schedule
 - Monday: 7:15-1:45 (all classes) – Early Release for Professional Development
 - Tuesday: 7:15-3:15 (all classes)
 - Wednesday: 7:15-3:15 (blocks 1, 3, 5, and 7)
 - Thursday: 7:15-3:15 (blocks 2, 4, 6, and 8)
 - Friday: 7:15-3:15 (all classes)
- Educational programs and courses
 - AVID Tutoring
 - International Baccalaureate
 - Newcomers for English Language Learners
 - Careers and Life Choices
 - Business
 - Construction Trades
 - Credit Recovery
 - Exceptional Student Services
 - Family/Consumer Sciences
 - Gifted and Talented
 - Vocational Education
- Clubs
 - Anime
 - Art
 - Big Brothers and Sisters
 - DECA
 - El Teatro
 - FBLA
 - FCCLA
 - Forensics
 - French
 - Horticulture
 - Link Crew
 - LULAC
 - Marching Band

- Martial Arts
- National Honor Society
- No Place for Hate
- Spanish
- Student Council
- Gay Straight Alliance
- Theatre
- Athletics
 - Football
 - Basketball (boys and girls)
 - Swimming and diving
 - Wrestling
 - Cross country
- TCAP Results (2013)
 - Grade 9
 - Math: 21%
 - Reading: 51%
 - Writing: 38%
 - Grade 10
 - Math: 16%
 - Reading: 56%
 - Science: 30%
 - Writing: 40%
 - GreatSchools Rating
 - Overall: 4/10 (average)
 - Test score rating: 3/10 (below average)
 - Student growth rating: 5/10 (average)
 - College readiness: 3/10 (below average)

Classroom Description: Theatre II

- Auditorium
 - Seats about 400
 - Light booth
 - Sound booth
 - Teacher's office
 - Male and female dressing rooms
 - Carpentry shop
 - Costume shop
- 45 students
 - 25 female – 20 male
 - 10 Hispanic – 35 white
 - Special Needs: 2
 - Gifted and Talented: 4
 - English Language Learners: 5

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Work Sample III
Unit Goals, Colorado Academic Standards, and Lesson Objectives

Unit Goals

After this unit, students will be able to name and explain the nine rules of improv that we have worked on in class. They will be able to explain why the rules are important for performing good improv scenes. Students should also understand that the rules we have learned in class also apply to other kinds of theatre as well as their own personal lives. From doing improv, students should gain confidence in themselves and their performance skills. When they are forced to perform without a safety net, they learn that they are capable individuals who have the skills and tools to handle whatever issues they may face either on stage or in other areas of their lives. Students will also strengthen their relationships with their classmates. Since teamwork is such a big part of doing improv, the students will learn to rely on and trust each other. This will hopefully carry on into other shows and events in the theatre program.

Content Area: Drama and Theatre Arts - Fundamental Pathway

Standard: 1. Create

The creation of drama and theatre is a demonstration of learned skills in forming new theatrical works, interpreting theatrical works for performance and design, developing characters, and analyzing roles.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway

Concepts and skills students master:

1. Creative process in character development and script improvisation

1) Prepared Graduates:

Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Apply these vocal techniques: Breath control, diction, projection, inflection, rhythm, and pace
- b. Employ these movement techniques: body alignment, control of isolated body parts, and rhythms
- c. Demonstrate knowledge of motivation (what the character wants) through the recall of emotional experience, blocking, and observations of the external world
- d. Recognize and work against the obstacle – what's in the character's way
- e. Identify and employ several tactics to get what the character wants
- f. Connect feelings to thought process when creating a character

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. How does analyzing character help to understand human behavior?
2. How does creating characters enhance real-world connections to literary and historical characters and diverse cultures?
3. How can using current technologies such as social networking, Internet research, and media support and assist with creating a character?
4. How does creating and understanding character background aid in the development of empathy?
5. How does the creative process aid in problem-solving skills?

Relevance and Application:

1. Analyzing character helps to understand human behavior (e.g., pedagogical growth, and mental health issues).
2. Creating characters enhances real-world connections to literary and historical characters, and diverse cultures.
3. Using current technologies, such as social networking, Internet research, and media can support assist with creating a character.
4. Creating a character can assist in developing one's personal voice.
5. Identification with a character connects one's empathy to themselves and others as human beings who live and work together.
6. Developing and building a character enhances one's creative process, which can aid in problem-solving skills.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. The process of creating a character is the foundation of human development and interaction.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway

Concepts and skills students master:

2. Technical elements of theatre in improvised and scripted works

2) Prepared Graduates:

- Use a variety of methods, new media, and technology to create theatrical works through the use of the creative process for performance, directing, design, construction, choreography, playwriting, scriptwriting, and dramaturgy
- Create drama and theatre by interpreting and appreciating theatrical works, culture, and experience through scenes and scenarios, improvisation, creating environments, purposeful movement, and research

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Demonstrate how to run a sound board and light board
- b. Show how to build simple pieces of scenery, and apply several different painting techniques
- c. Apply basic makeup techniques for the stage
- d. Identify appropriate stage properties and costumes for a given production
- e. Create a publicity campaign for a given production
- f. Understand and use technology to enhance activities and dramatizations
- g. Create a project that uses electronic media to present a dramatic form in a new or enhanced way
- h. Practice safety procedures for working with tools, paints, electrical equipment, and scene-shifting equipment

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. Why is the technical side of theatre important?
2. How do the technical aspects of a production support the overall presentation?
3. How is the creative process influenced by the technical aspects of a production?

Relevance and Application:

1. Investigating the roles of live theatre, film, cinema, television, and electronic media help to interpret the world at large.
2. Studying technical arts can lead to careers in many disciplines such as architecture and design, the practice of law, engineering, and broadcast.
3. Researching the numerous historical and inventive aspects of technical theatre leads to a deeper understanding of the field.
4. Understanding improvisational technique in theatre gives insight to improvisation in music.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Drama and theatre are multifaceted collaborations that involve numerous levels of production aspects, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills to achieve a vision or concept.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway

Concepts and skills students master:

3. Expression, imagination, and appreciation in group dynamics

3) Prepared Graduates:

Use a variety of methods, new media, and technology to create theatrical works through the use of the creative process for performance, directing, design, construction, choreography, playwriting, scriptwriting, and dramaturgy

Evidence Outcomes**Students in the fundamental pathway can:**

- a. Create scenes and narrative structures to convey a dramatic intention
- b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation
- c. Use improvisation as a form and a key technique to develop play building

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies**Inquiry Questions:**

1. Why is play creation significant?
2. What does improvisation do for the development of the individual?
3. How can improvisation assist in play creation?
4. How is improvisation relevant and useful in other content areas?
5. How does a group collaborate to create something new?

Relevance and Application:

1. Using current social, political, historical, and cultural themes, issues, or philosophies improves creative works.
2. Employing improvisational skills builds on the play making and playwriting processes and develops spontaneous ingenuity in the workplace.
3. Building on various technical sources augments creative works.
4. Collaborating and working cohesively in a group can lead to a productive and successful work environment.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. In creating devised works, an inventive, collaborative process is employed.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway**Concepts and skills students master:**

4. Interpretation of drama using scripted material

4) Prepared Graduates:

Create drama and theatre by interpreting and appreciating theatrical works, culture, and experience through scenes and scenarios, improvisation, creating environments, purposeful movement, and research

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Select a scene from literature, original, or scripted material, and contribute to the direction of a scene as a member of an ensemble
- b. Articulate the rationale for all artistic choices concerning historical periods, genres, and relevant playwrights
- c. Determine casting, staging, and technical requirements

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. How does the selection of a literary work reflect the capabilities of the ensemble process?
2. How does the ensemble process help to build character and self direction?
3. How does a director determine casting?
4. How can music, dance, or art convey a culture or experience?

Relevance and Application:

1. Participating in theatrical experiences builds confidence and fosters problem-solving skills.
2. Using technology can recreate environment, enhance a production, and bring a creative work to life.
3. Understanding the historical and cultural relevance of a play's structure helps to establish the connection among time, place, function, and environment.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. The ability to work collaboratively is realized through coordinating with a production staff to finalize production details.

Standard: 2. Perform

The theatrical process is a product of the knowledge and essential skills gained in the study of drama and theatre arts toward the expression of the human experience in story, movement, speech, and staging for an intended audience.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway

Concepts and skills students master:

1. Communicate meaning to engage an audience

1) Prepared Graduates:

Express drama and theatre arts skills in a variety of performances, including plays, monologues, improvisation, purposeful movement, scenes, design, technical craftsmanship, media, ensemble works, and public speaking

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene
- b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking
- c. Demonstrate the ability to utilize the conventions of the following styles: Realism, mime, vaudeville, puppetry, clowning, comedy, tragedy, improvisation, and melodrama

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. Why rehearse and perform theatrical material?
2. What roles does an audience play in a variety of performances?
3. What role does public speaking play in the world of drama and theatre arts?
4. How does one effectively communicate ideas and thoughts to an audience?

5. How does one build and develop a relationship with an audience?

Relevance and Application:

1. Understanding the historical and cultural background of different forms of theatre aids one in creating believable performances.
2. Utilizing technology can assist in performances, house management systems, and budgeting practices.
3. Studying drama and theatre techniques, forms, styles, and conventions enhances and supports studies in other fields such as music and dance, advertising and marketing, and politics.
4. Building a relationship with an audience is essential for effective communication.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Participation in individual and ensemble projects instills discipline, initiative, and responsibility, teaches conflict resolution, and promotes taking risks.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway

Concepts and skills students master:

2. Technology reinforces, enhances, and/or alters a theatrical performance

2) Prepared Graduates:

Demonstrate the evolution of rehearsal and product through performance and/or production teamwork while simultaneously validating both as essential to the theatre making process

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Participate as a member of a technical crew and management team for a production
- b. Inform the design of sets, costumes, sound, and lighting for a theatrical production
- c. Exhibit an understanding of the interrelationship among the technical aspects of production, onstage performers, and audiences
- d. Apply technical knowledge of safety procedures and practices in the theatre environment

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. Why is the technical crew important?
2. Why is research in the support of a theatrical production necessary?
3. What is the value of exhibiting and understanding technical aspects of a production?
4. What is the value of hands-on learning in a theatrical environment?

Relevance and Application:

1. Using appropriate technology provides opportunities for meaningful theatrical experiences and expression by individuals who may not be performers.
2. Recognizing safety concerns within a theatrical environment reflects safety in the workplace.
3. Utilizing historical development of technological systems informs the connectivity to science and vocations such as software development, engineering, graphic design, and architecture.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Using technology in a performance promotes nonverbal expression, enhances production value, and

fosters independent reasoning.

**Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway
Concepts and skills students master:**

3. Directing as an art form

3) Prepared Graduates:

Demonstrate the evolution of rehearsal and product through performance and/or production teamwork while simultaneously validating both as essential to the theatre making process

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Select and use performance spaces, drama and theatre conventions, and production elements appropriate to an audience
- b. Generate audience response
- c. Facilitate the rehearsal process
- d. Bring a vision to fruition

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. Why is a director essential in the playmaking process?
2. What is the director's responsibility with regard to his or her commitment to the production concept?
3. What is the relationship of the director to his or her audience?
4. What are the best practices to facilitate rehearsal?

Relevance and Application:

1. Understanding the interdisciplinary and real world connections within a director's concept for a production allows an audience to grasp the material by building on their prior knowledge or context of the world around them.
2. Locating the resources needed to support a production informs and determines the production concept and requires strong research, reasoning, and problem-solving.
3. Utilizing a director's skills, such as organizing, blocking, preparing rehearsals, scheduling, and conceptualizing, promotes successful leaders.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Working with a production team fosters collaboration, independent thinking, critical response, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills.

Standard: 3. Critically Respond

An informed literacy, thoughtful critique, and cultural research are key aspects of drama and theatre arts study. Responding focuses on the artistic and scientific knowledge of conventions, cultures, styles, genres, theories, and technologies needed to know better choices and best practices.

**Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway
Concepts and skills students master:**

1. Analysis and evaluation of theatrical works

1) Prepared Graduates:

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of theatre history, dramatic structure, dramatic literature, elements of style, genre, artistic theory, script analysis, and roles of theatre practitioners through research and application

Evidence Outcomes**Students in the fundamental pathway can:**

- a. Research the ways in which other artists have used self-reflection to document and refine their work
- b. Identify and describe orally and in writing the influence of other artists on the development of their own artistic work
- c. Demonstrate knowledge of conventional theatre vocabulary
- d. Research the cultural and historical background of a specific play
- e. Communicate individual research to a collaborative team

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies**Inquiry Questions:**

1. What can be gained by observing numerous and contrasting live performances?
2. How does objectivity relate to experiencing a piece of art?
3. Why is theatre live and what are the benefits of live theatrical performances?
4. How should audience members and crew conduct themselves before, during, and after a performance?
5. Why is self-reflection important in any area of study and practice?
6. How does one learn and acquire job- and content-specific vocabulary?

Relevance and Application:

1. Practicing proper behavior and dress at a public performance validates one's position as an adult in society.
2. Investigating the importance of copyright laws in scriptwriting, set and costume design, script adaptation, and the use of music in production supports respect for these vocations and artists.
3. Respecting the roles of the theatre family promotes maturity and social responsibility.
4. Studying, practicing, and expanding upon other artists' work is what makes theatre a constantly evolving art form.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Proper etiquette in a theatrical environment helps the audience appreciate the production and translates to a greater respect for the arts.

Grade Level Expectation: HS Expectations – Fundamental Pathway**Concepts and skills students master:**

2. Evaluation of elements of drama, dramatic techniques, and theatrical conventions

2) Prepared Graduates:

Make informed, critical evaluations of theatrical performance from an audience member and a participant point of view, and develop a framework for making informed theatrical choices

Evidence Outcomes**Students in the fundamental pathway can:**

- a. Critique and evaluate artistic choices and personal reactions to dramatic presentations using guidelines for evaluating a theatrical production
- b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas
- c. Compare and contrast practices and methods of performance with the practices and methods of film, cinema, television, and electronic media
- d. Perform improvised scenes reflecting content, character and plot from representational dramatic literature

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. What are the guidelines for understanding a theatrical production?
2. How can artistic choices affect a production?
3. What types of themes and practices within a theatrical performance can be identified and compared with other medians?
4. What criteria make a play performance better or worse than another?
5. How does one write or speak about evaluations of theatrical works and performances?
6. What role do critiques and reviews play in the performing arts?
7. What elements contribute to a personal response to a theatrical production?

Relevance and Application:

1. Analyzing and articulating knowledge of theatrical works from various cultures enhances a personal engagement with dramatic literature and awareness of other cultures and lifestyles.
2. Responding to the study of modern theatre and various media and various cultures validates studies and proficiency in language arts, world languages, business, social studies, sciences, mathematics, physical education, and performing arts.
3. Comparing and contrasting film and cinema and media presentations from various genres and cultures broadens the scope and appeal of artistic technologies from around the world.
4. Evaluating and responding to theatrical productions allow for freedom of speech and interpretation within the performing arts.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Critical response to theatrical works objectifies and validates the importance of the field to the well-rounded growth of the individual and the overall growth and functionality of school, community, and culture.

Grade Level Expectation: High School – Fundamental Pathway

Concepts and skills students master:

3. Respect for theatre, its practitioners, and conventions

3) Prepared Graduates:

Discern and demonstrate appropriate theatre etiquette and content for the audience, self, venue, technician, and performer

Evidence Outcomes

Students in the fundamental pathway can:

- a. Attend live performances of extended length and complexity, and demonstrate an understanding of the protocol of audience behavior appropriate to the style of the performance
- b. Use group-generated criteria to assess one's own work and the work of others

- c. Demonstrate objectivity in assessing one's personal abilities in creative endeavors and ability to receive and act upon coaching feedback and constructive criticism
- d. Devise specific methods for documenting and assessing one's own artistic development throughout participation in a drama or theatre project
- e. Demonstrate a respect for copyright laws
- f. Address the importance of timelines and personal responsibility as a member of a production ensemble

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. What can be gained by observing numerous and contrasting live performances?
2. How does objectivity relate to experiencing a piece of art?
3. Why is theatre live, and what are the benefits of live theatrical performances?
4. How should audience members and crew conduct themselves before, during, and after a performance?
5. How does one incorporate and utilize constructive criticism to improve their skill base?
6. How do one individual's role, behavior, and attitude affect the entire ensemble and production?

Relevance and Application:

1. Practicing proper behavior and dress at a public performance validates one's position as an adult in society.
2. Investigating the importance of copyright laws in scriptwriting, set and costume design, script adaptation, and the use of music in production supports respect for these vocations and artists.
3. Respecting the roles of the theatre family promotes maturity and social responsibility.
4. Adhering to schedules, time restraints, and deadlines, and learning to prioritize are valuable life skills that promote positive social and work related relationships.
5. Respecting, accepting, and utilizing constructive criticism can improve one's performance in any career.

Nature of Drama and Theatre Arts:

1. Proper etiquette in a theatrical environment helps the audience appreciate the production and translates to a greater respect for the arts.

Lesson Objectives

Lesson 1: Intro to Improv

Students will discuss how improv is relevant to the entertainment industry

Students will learn about the nine rules of improv

Students will begin to consider how the rules of improv can affect their own lives

Create: 3b; CR: 2a, b

Lesson 2:

Students will learn the first three improv rules in depth

Students will demonstrate the first three rules in action

Students will reflect on how the first three rules are important

Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b

Lesson 3:

Students will learn the next three rules of improv

Students will demonstrate the rules in action

Students will reflect on how the first set of rules combine with the second set

Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b

Lesson 4:

Students will learn the last three rules of improv

Students will demonstrate the rules in action

Students will reflect on how all nine rules work together to make good improv

Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b

Lesson 5:

Students will show understanding of the rules by taking their final exam

Students will demonstrate use of the rules during an improv performance in front of their peers

Students will reflect on how the rules of improv apply to theatre and life outside of theatre

Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b

Work Sample IV
Lesson Plans

Lesson 1

Your Name: Samantha Black

Unit Title: Improv Your Life

Lesson Title: Intro to Improv

Time Frame: 50 minutes

Necessary Materials: Laptop, Youtube video, projector, screen, dry erase markers, whiteboard, pre-assessment

Prior Content Knowledge: Students have learned projection, diction, blocking basics, and cold-reading from scripts.

New Content Knowledge: Students will begin learning the nine most important rules of improv as well as the key famous improv theatres

Desired Results

Established Goals:

Create:

3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

Critically Respond:

2 a. Critique and evaluate artistic choices and personal reactions to dramatic presentations using guidelines for evaluating a theatrical production;

b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Essential Questions/Global:

How can one benefit from improv in other areas of his or her life?

Essential Questions/Content Area:

What are the rules for creating a good improv scene? What types of improv are there/where do people go to learn about improv?

Students Will Understand:

Students will understand that there are rules to improvisation and that many of these rules can also apply to other areas of theatre/their lives.

Students Will Be Able:

Students will be able to name and employ the rules of improv and will be able to name a few key facts about the culture of improv.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: Students will discuss why they think having rules in improv is important and how these rules can help them in their day to day lives.

Summative Assessment: At the end of the unit, students will perform in multiple improv scenes demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the rules. Students will also take a short quiz.

Reflection: What are the benefits to knowing the rules of improv?

Learning Plan

Hook: YouTube Video: I will have a YouTube video of a short improv clip done at the Groundlings theatre ready to go when the students walk into the classroom. *Good morning, students! How are we all doing today?*

Good! Okay, so I'm really excited for this next unit. Can anyone guess what we'll be studying the next couple of weeks?

Improv! I actually really love improv. I know that some of you may be a little apprehensive about it, but I'm hoping that this unit will take some of the fear away and be really fun for you guys! Have any of you ever had any experience with improv before?

To start today off, I thought we would watch a short clip of some improv. This was filmed at the Groundlings Theatre in Los Angeles. I wanted to pick a clip not from TV so that you guys could see it and know that it hasn't been edited to make the performers look better. Basically what the exercise is is that the improvisers are given a fake movie title of a film they are acting in. When the director calls out to a character, that character has to perform an Oscar-worthy monologue in the middle of the scene. I want you to pay attention to the clip, because it will be used in our discussion today. Play video.

Do you guys kind of see how that works?

Activity: Translation Standards: *Before we jump into our main discussion on improv, I would like to go over the standards of this unit. Call on volunteer to read the first standard.*

Create 3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

Okay! So that first part seems pretty straightforward to me. Can anyone take a guess as to what they think the second part means? If they don't know, guide students into saying that it basically means that you work and cooperate with your teammates. Awesome! Can I have a volunteer read the second standard for me, please?

Perform 1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

Once again, pretty straightforward, right? Since improv is all about doing, so we will be up on our feet a lot during this unit. Can I have someone read the third standard for me, please?

CR 2 b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Alright, what do you guys think this means in relation to improv? (Students need to eventually say that we will be learning how improv is related to other areas in theatre and life.) Great! Okay, enough with all these standards. I have a little pre-test for you guys to take. Don't worry; it's not for a grade. I just want to see how much you all know. At the end of the unit, you will be taking a similar test for a grade. Hand out test and give students 10-15 minutes to complete it.

Direct Instruction: *I know I said that we would be on our feet a lot these next couple of weeks, but improv isn't all just fun and games (well, it is... but there are also rules). Today we will be laying the foundation for the rest of the unit. It will be the only day where there is more discussion than activity, so*

please stay with me, guys. I would like everyone to take notes during this portion of class.

Okay! Onwards and upwards. First of all, can any of you name any famous improvisers? Let students throw out some names. I can help if needed. Lots of famous successfully actors have a background in improv; comedians, especially. You know that video that we watched from the Groundlings? That's actually a really famous improv theatre. That's where a lot of actors get cast on SNL from. The Upright Citizen's Brigade and Second City are another two renowned improv theatres where a lot of famous actors got their start. Even movies use improv. I know for a fact that movies like Bridesmaids and Anchorman rely heavily on improv. In fact, those movie scripts basically start out as a shell, and then the actors add and add and add their own material and jokes. So, if you're wanting to be an actor, learning improv can be a really great tool.

I feel like a common misconception about improv is that there are no rules. That is absolutely not the case. There's actually a lot of guidelines and nuances to doing improv. I have picked the nine most important rules based off of my research and personal experience. However, there's no fun in me just telling you guys what they are; I want you to try and guess. Does anyone have any ideas?

Hints for rules 1-9:

- 1- Always Say Yes: What's the most important rule of improv? It's what you do when someone offers you a million dollars and a trip around the world. *When you're in a scene, it's important to be a team player. If your partner offers up a suggestion that doesn't fit with what you were thinking, it is your job as a good improviser to go along with your partner and agree with their idea.* Give example of what happens when someone says no.
- 2- Who What Where: This is important in theatre, as well. How do we know what the scene is about? *Typically, you want to introduce the who/what/where within the first three lines or so of an improv scene. What are the characters' relationships to each other? What are they doing? Where are they? This will help everyone in the improv and watching figure out what it is about.*
- 3- Do SOMETHING: This is a tactic for when you feel you are stuck in a scene and don't know what to do or say. *Sometimes in an improv, the scene might get stuck or you might freeze up. It's okay. Just do SOMETHING. There are no wrong moves. It's not scripted, and this is your world that you created. Pull a sandwich out of your pocket and start eating. Sit on the floor and sob. It will give your partner/team something to react to and get the scene unstuck.*
- 4- Trust Your Partner: This is something that is important for actors to have in each other, and not just in improv. *You need to trust your scene partners. When you walk on that stage, remember that you are not alone. Even if you have no clue what you're doing, your partner is there to help. Improv is a group effort. This also plays into the Always Say Yes Rule. It takes trust to follow someone's lead.*
- 5- Don't Explain, Show: Theatre is all about action, right? So what do you think this rule might be? *A good general rule in improv is Don't Explain, Show. Why talk about robbing a bank when you could actually rob a bank? It's so much more interesting for an audience to watch action than to listen to action being talked about. If you're talking about doing something, just do it! When we get to this rule, we will talk about how you can transition from one "location" to another.*
- 6- Don't Plan: This rule plays into the first rule. What happens if you have an idea in your head and then that idea is contradicted? *The sixth rule is Don't Plan. This one ties into Always Say Yes. Don't try and plan your improv scenes ahead of time. If you are stuck on an idea in your head, it is so much harder to be flexible and go where your team and the scene take you. 90% of the time, your plan will get thrown out the window. Focus on listening and reacting.*

- 7- Don't Fight: This is one of the easiest rules to break, because it's a good way to add conflict to a scene. *One of the easiest traps to fall into while improvising is arguing in a scene. While it is an easy way to add drama or conflict, it usually takes a scene nowhere. Think about it. When you are arguing, what are you doing? You're saying no, which breaks the very first rule. I find that it is much easier to solve a problem together. Remember the improv we watched at the beginning of class? The actors did a god job of not fighting. There was conflict from the wolf being wild, but there was no argument.*
- 8- Make Statements: This kind of goes along with the Do Something rule, but in reference to the dialogue. *In improv, you never want to ask too many questions in a scene. When you do this, it puts a lot of pressure on your partner. When you say things like "What are you doing?" "Where are we?" etc. you're putting your partner on the spot to create the scene his or her self. One of the funnest parts about improv is figuring out the scene with your partners, not forcing one person to come up with the entire thing. Also, when a lot of questions are being asked, it's likely that there is not a whole lot of action being done.*
- 9- HAVE FUN: This is the rule that people tend to forget. *HAVE FUN!!! Improv is fun. It's silly. Yes, sometimes it can be high stress, but in the end it's all just play. It's not brain surgery. And if you're having fun, the audience is having fun. The audience is rooting for you to succeed. If you are miserable, the audience can tell, and that's not fun to watch even if you are technically doing "good" improv. Not every improv scene will be perfect; in fact, you will rarely have a perfect improv scene. It's fun for the audience to make discoveries with you, so don't feel like you have to have all of the answers.*

I really like these rules, because I feel like you can use a lot of them in your everyday life, too. Can any of you give me an example of a time when one of these rules would apply to school, scripted theatre, or even your personal life? Okay, enough with the rules. Does anyone have any additional questions? Answer questions if any. Perfect!

I feel like that was a lot of sitting for a theatre class. How about we end the day on our feet? Everybody get up and push your desks back. Let's make a circle in the middle of the room for some stretching. Lead students in stretching. Alright. Are we all nice and limber? Are any of you guys familiar with Zip Zap Zop? Have students get into a standing circle. If a student is familiar, let him or her explain the exercise. Yes, exactly! The most important part of this exercise is eye contact with whoever you are sending you ZipZapZop to, so they know that they are the ones receiving it. This is also a perfect time to work on our projection. Alright, let's play! Let students play for a few minutes.

Okay, now that our minds and bodies are warmed up, let's try an exercise that helps us practice the first rule. Who can tell me what that first rule was? Let students answer. That's right! This exercise is called "Yes, And." I'm going to put you into pairs. Number students off and let them find their partner. Great! So what you guys will do is one person will start with a suggestion, and then the other person will reply with "Yes, and..." and build upon the first suggestion. You guys will continue to build and grow the statements until I stop you. Can I have a pair of volunteers to read this example for me, please? Let volunteers read. Any questions? Alright, perfect! Play with your partner until I stop you.

Let students play for a few minutes.

Awesome! How did that go for everybody? What challenges did you guys come across? As I was walking around the room, it looked like everybody had a pretty good understanding of the activity.

We'll be doing lots of exercises in class, so if you have done improv before and have specific exercises you'd like to see about doing, please feel free to come and see me. Good job today, class! I will see all of you next class.

Supporting Materials for First Lesson

“Yes, And” Exercise Example:

Person A: Let’s go to the zoo!

Person B: Yes, and then let’s go look at the monkeys!

Person A: Okay, and while we’re there, we should free the monkeys!

Person B: Yes, and then let’s film it!

Person A: Perfect, and then we should put it on Youtube!

Person B: Okay, and then we can get interviewed on *Ellen!*

8. Make Statements:

9. HAVE FUN:

Upright Citizen's Brigade:

Groundling's Theatre:

Second City:

Second Lesson

Your Name: Samantha Black

Unit Title: Improv Your Life

Lesson Title: Getting Into It

Time Frame: 50 minutes

Necessary Materials: Comfortable clothing, fourteen random items

Prior Content Knowledge: Students have learned projection, diction, blocking basics, and cold-reading from scripts. Students have also received an overview of the nine rules of improv.

New Content Knowledge: Students will begin learning the “Always Say Yes”, “Who, What, Where?”, and “DO SOMETHING” rules.

Desired Results

Established Goals:

Create:

3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

Perform:

1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Critically Respond:

2 a. Critique and evaluate artistic choices and personal reactions to dramatic presentations using guidelines for evaluating a theatrical production;

b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Essential Questions/Global:

Why do we study improv?

Essential Questions/Content Area:

Why are the three rules listed above important to learn if one wants to be good at improvising?

Students Will Understand:

Students will understand that learning the rules builds a solid foundation (and that to break the rules you have to first know the rules).

Students Will Be Able:

Students will be able to agree with their scene partner(s), establish the who/what/where of a scene, and be able to move the scene forward by performing an action.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: Students will discuss why they think having rules in improv is important and how these rules can help them in their day to day lives.

Summative Assessment: At the end of the unit, students will perform in multiple improv scenes demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the rules. Students will also take a short quiz.

Reflection: In today's exercises, what came naturally and what did students struggle with? Why?

Learning Plan

Direct Instruction:

Good morning, class! How is everybody today?

Good! So today we are going to jump right into actually DOING some improv. I need you all to push your desks to the back and form a circle in the middle of the room for some stretching.

Lead students in a three to five minute stretch.

Alright, are we all feeling good? We're going to play a little warm up exercise now. This one has a fair few variations, but are any of you familiar with the exercise Samurai?

If there are students who know the exercise, let them explain. If their version is different, explain the differences. If no one is familiar with the exercise:

Okay, this is going to help get our minds and bodies warmed up. Do you remember Zip Zap Zop from last week? This is kind of like that, but louder and more physical. We'll stay in our circle, and I'll start the exercise by making a loud sound and throwing my energy to someone else in the circle. It is important to make eye contact with this person so he or she knows that the energy is coming. That person will receive the energy by lifting their arms and making a sound, and the person on either side of the receiver will mime (there is no touching in this exercise) chopping the receiver's side (also while making a noise). The receiver will then throw the energy to a new person and the cycle continues. Any questions?

Do exercise for about three minutes.

Awesome! Now, do you guys remember playing "Yes, And" last week? Can I get two volunteers to step into the middle of the circle and demonstrate for the class? Remember, only use statements.

Let students play for a minute. Reflect with class on what happens.

*Great! Lets try a new exercise now. This one is called **Accepting Circle**, and it's basically a physicalized version of "Yes, And". It starts out with just one person making a movement. It can be anything (as long as it's appropriate). Everyone in the circle will repeat the movement. Then, the person to the right of the original person will repeat the first movement and then add their own. Everyone in the circle then repeats the two moves. We keep adding on moves in the same way until everyone in the circle has contributed. If you wish to add a sound to your movement, you may do that as well (the sound must be repeated along with the move every time). Any questions?*

Do the exercise until it comes back around full circle.

Good job, guys! Can anyone explain to me how this relates to the “Yes, and” rule?

Let students explain.

*Totally! Okay. We have just one more exercise for the “Yes, and” rule today. We’re going to make up our own story as a group. The first person will start a story with “**Once upon a time....**” and begin to tell a story of whatever they want, no rules (except it has to be appropriate). Without warning, I’m going to call on a new person. Person A will have to stop talking, and Person B will have to pick up the story **RIGHT** where Person A left off (no pausing allowed). This will continue until everyone has had at least one turn to speak. The story does not end until I say, so it’s your job to keep it going.*

Let students play until everyone has had a turn and the story finds a conclusion.

Nice! That went really well! Did you guys struggle with this at all? How does this exercise encourage us to say yes?

Discuss.

I really think you guys are understanding “Always Say Yes”, so we’re going to move on. The next rule we’re going to practice today is “Who, What, Where?”. Can somebody tell me what this rule means?

Let student answer.

*Exactly! Now, this first exercise is called **3 Lines**, and I need two volunteers. Great! Now, the goal of this exercise is to establish as much information as quickly as possible. The scene will only last for three lines total, and you need to establish the who/what/where. Lucky for our volunteers, I have already scripted out a couple example scenes for them to read so that you guys aren’t jumping in totally blind.*

Have volunteers read the examples.

Do you guys see how that works? Great. You don’t need to be funny or anything. This is just practice for getting the information out quickly. Let’s practice. I want you guys to get into pairs and practice doing this with your partner for just a couple of minutes.

Let students work with partners for a minute or two. Discuss what was easy/hard about the activity.

*Alright, because you guys are so awesome, I’m going to add a twist. Have any of you played the **Alphabet Game** before? Here’s how it works. You can start on any letter, but for the sake of easiness, we’ll go with A. Person A will start their sentence with a word that starts with A. Person B responds with a sentence that starts with the letter B. Person A will respond with a sentence that starts with the letter C and so on. This will continue until you reach the end of the alphabet. I want you guys to still try and establish the who/what/where within the first three lines, but it’s okay if it doesn’t quite happen. Just do your best.*

Let students play in partners until they reach the end of the alphabet. Go around as a class and ask each

group when they were actually able to establish the who/what/where and discuss anything else that may come up.

*Okay, great. Now when I say go, you guys are going to form two lines. One partner will go to Line A and the other one will go to line B. Go! Alright. This next exercise is called **Doors**, and it really focuses on establishing the location of the scene. The first person in Line A will establish a scene by walking onstage through a “door.” When you walk through the door, you want to show through your physicality what you are walking into. Maybe you are going from inside where it’s warm to outside where it’s freezing cold. Maybe you are exiting out of a spaceship into outer-space. Try to keep the talking to a minimum, but you can use sound effects. Once the first person in Line B has an idea of where Person A is, they will walk through the door and deliver a line of dialogue that establishes the two character’s relationship. Player A responds to Player B accepting their offer, and the scene ends. Each player will go to the back of the OTHER line. We will play two rounds so that everybody has a chance to play both roles.*

Let students play.

Good job, guys! Do we all see how that works? Can any of you tell me how the “Always Say Yes” rule also plays into this exercise? After doing the last three exercises, can you tell me why it’s important to establish the who/what/where?

*You guys are nailing it today. Alright. Our last rule today is DO SOMETHING. I kind of struggled figuring out where to put this in the unit, but obviously I decided to tackle it today. I think that this will help take away some of the anxiety in building an actual improv scene. The first exercise we’re doing is called **Crisis Situation**. Today I have brought with me some super random items (I will hand out an item to each student as I talk). Now these are my personal property, so please be gentle with them. So, two at a time, you will get up with your item. Each person has a problem that they need solved, and the other person’s item will solve it. Can I have two volunteers read this example for me, please? Great! You see how it works? Be creative in your solutions. They don’t have to make perfect sense; you just have to be quick and make a decision. Alright! Everyone will take a turn, but do I have any volunteers?*

Do exercise and discuss afterwards.

*Alright. Everyone can sit down in a semi-circle facing forwards. The next exercise is called **Change**. We may do this one a couple of different times with volunteers. Could I get two people to come up to the front, please? Great! Now, can I get a suggestion for a scene? We need a who/what/where. Awesome! Now, actors, you have your given circumstances. You will start the scene just like normal. However, I will periodically call out “Change!” If I call out change, the person who just spoke/performed an action will have to change what they have done. They can change their words, their physicality, their emotion, etc. Any questions?*

Play a couple rounds.

What did you guys as an audience notice about this activity? How did you feel as the improvisers?

*Nice! Okay, have any of you played **Freeze** before?*

If students have, let them explain. If not:

This last one is a really fun exercise, and it's one of my favorites. Two people will start out in the middle of the circle. We will give them a physical task to begin the scene with. They will start the scene and make physical choices in their acting. When one of us in the circle calls out "Freeze!", the actors in the middle have to freeze right where they are. The person who called out freeze will go into the middle, tap out one of the actors, and assume the position that the original person was in. However, now it is a new scene with new characters doing something different. If two people call out freeze at the same time, they will both go in. Questions?

Let students play and then we will discuss.

Can I get a volunteer to tell me the importance of the "Always Say Yes" rule? How about the other two? Did you guys find anything especially difficult today? Could you see yourselves using any of these rules in scripted acting? How? You guys did so awesome. Let's go back to the standards real quick.

Standards:

Can someone tell me how we addressed 3 b today?

Create 3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

How about 1 a and b?

Perform 1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Lastly, 2 b?

CR 2 b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Excellent. You guys rocked it today. Next class we will be going over three more rules of improv. We will also be doing trust falls, so if you are uncomfortable with this activity, please come and see me after class and we can discuss some alternative options. I also need everyone to bring a t-shirt with them to the next class (I will explain why then). Please come to class dressed appropriately and ready to have some fun! Have a nice afternoon, guys!

Supporting Materials for Second Lesson

3 Lines Example 1

Person A: Captain, we have apprehended the suspect.

Person B: Good work officer.

Person A: He's in holding room A, and I think he's ready to talk.

3 Lines Example 2

Person A: Pat, put your phone away.

Person B: But Teacher, I finished the assignment already!

Person A: Please go grab a book from the shelf; you know there's no texting in class.

Crisis Situation Example

Person A: My wife left me and I'm stuck here with this t-shirt.

Person B: I got robbed and all I have left is my good looks.

Person A: Here's my t-shirt; you can sell it and make some money.

Person B: Erm... Marry me.

Third Lesson

Your Name: Samantha Black

Unit Title: Improv Your Life

Lesson Title: Second Three Lessons

Time Frame: 50 minutes

Necessary Materials: Comfortable clothing, t-shirts, examples for He Said She Said and Blind Line Offers, *NY Times* UCB article

Prior Content Knowledge: Students have learned projection, diction, blocking basics, and cold-reading from scripts. Students have also received an overview of the nine rules of improv. Students have spent class time studying “Always Say Yes”, “Who, What, Where?”, and “DO SOMETHING” rules.

New Content Knowledge: Students will begin learning the “Trust Your Partner”, “Don’t Explain”, and “Don’t Plan” rules.

Desired Results

Established Goals:

Create:

3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

Perform:

1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Critically Respond:

2 a. Critique and evaluate artistic choices and personal reactions to dramatic presentations using guidelines for evaluating a theatrical production;

b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Essential Questions/Global:

How can we apply the rules of improv in other areas of acting?

Essential Questions/Content Area:

Why are the three rules listed above important to learn if one wants to be good at improvising?

How do these new rules fit in with the rules learned in the last class period?

Students Will Understand:

Students will understand that learning the rules builds a solid foundation (and that to break the rules you have to first know the rules).

Students Will Be Able:

Students will be able to build trust between themselves and their peers through different exercises.

Students will also be able to integrate more action into their improve scenes and fight the urge to plan.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: Students will discuss why they think the three new rules are important to learn. We will also talk about how these rules still tie into the first three rules. Students will provide scenarios that these rules are useful in improve and/or other situations.

Summative Assessment: At the end of the unit, students will perform in multiple improv scenes demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the rules. Students will also take a short quiz.

Reflection: In today's exercises, what came naturally and what did students struggle with? Why? Were students able to successfully integrate the new rules into their performances while still employing what we learned last class period?

Learning Plan

Direct Instruction:

Good morning class! How is everyone doing today?

Awesome! So, who can tell me what we did last class period? Let students answer. Students need to say and define the three rules we learned from the previous class.

Good memory, guys! That means that we have six more rules to go. Can anyone name any that we haven't talked about today? Wait for students to answer. If they are stuck, prompt them with hints. *I know, it's a lot to remember. But the good news is, it's broken up into pieces, and by the time we're done, you guys will know the rules like the backs of your hands. Funnily enough, I happened to stumble across an article about a book of improv rules that the founders of the UCB wrote. Who can tell me what the UCB is? That's right! I've printed us all a copy of the article so that we can read it together.* Pass out article. Read the article as a group by calling on students to read each paragraph.

Do you guys agree with what they're saying about the necessity of having rules in improv? Were any of you surprised by anything in the article? What do you think about what Mr. Napier said about doing improv from a place of "play"? If any of you have questions about the UCB (or Groundlings and Second City), I am always available if you want to chat. Moving on!

I hope you guys liked being up on your feet last class period, because we're doing the same thing today. I need everybody to stand up, push your desks back, and make a circle in the center of the room. We're going to do our stretches.

Guide students through stretches while everybody counts.

*Does everybody feel loosened up? Good! Now we're going to do a warm-up activity. This one is called **Greetings**. When I say go, you will all start walking around the room, just how you normally would. After a few seconds, I will ask you to greet your fellow classmates. It can be a handshake, a wave, etc. After you greet one and other, keep walking and greeting, but make sure you're listening, because I am going to give you additional instruction during the exercise.*

Let students walk around and greet for thirty seconds or so. As they walk around, ask them to greet their peers with more specific instructions, like:

- Greet each other like a long-lost friend
- Greet each other like mortal enemies

Greet each other like someone with bad breath

*Alright, good job guys! Now I'm going to put you in partners. Pair students off. How many of you have done **trust falls** before? Wait for response. If anyone knows, let them answer and explain what a trust fall is. Exactly! After I say go, I want you and your partner to find your own area in the room. You and your partner are going to take turns catching each other. I want you to start close, and gradually move farther and farther apart. Can I get a pair to volunteer to demonstrate what I mean?*

Have volunteers demonstrate with coaching.

Any questions? Okay. Now I need you guys to remember: this is about building trust. You cannot let your partner down by dropping him/her. It's your job to know your limits, and if you feel like you are standing so far apart that you cannot hold their weight or that you might drop them, don't do the fall. I will be walking around the room checking in with you guys and setting up our next activity. Alright, go for it, guys!

Let students to trust falls around the room. While they are doing their activity, I will be walking around the room setting up an obstacle course with chairs/boxes/etc. for the next exercise (while also checking in with groups).

Very nice, everybody. What did you guys think of this activity? Did anyone feel like they were going to be dropped? How hard was it for you to trust your partner? Do you think the falls helped you build a connection?

*Okay! Remember how I told you to bring a t-shirt? When I say go, I want you to go and get yours and come back to the middle of the room. If you forgot to bring one, you can come grab one from me. Ready?... Go! Let students get shirts and come back. Alright, I'm going to put you into new pairs. Number students off and let them get into their new pairs. This next activity is called **Blind Lead**. As you may have noticed, I have created an obstacle course around the room. When I say, one partner is going to take their t-shirt and secure it around their eyes so that they can't see. The other partner will then lead them through to the opposite side of the room using just their words; no touching. Make sure you avoid running into any obstacles or people. After you do that, you guys can switch so that each person gets to lead/follow. Place pairs around the room so that they are spread out and each have a unique path. Let students play until each pair has done both roles.*

Awesome! I have to say, that was pretty entertaining for me to watch, at least. What did you guys think of this exercise? Did you find it easier to trust your partner as the activity went on? Was there any time when your partner let you down? How do you think an improve scene would be affected if you didn't feel that you could trust your partner(s)?

So I think you guys understand how important trust is in improve. Let's move on to the second rule for today, "Don't Explain, Show". This next exercise is called "What Happens Next". We'll play this one as a group, so everybody, get in a circle. Let students circle up. In this exercise, one volunteer stands in the circle of the room and is given a task (like "she makes a bowl of oatmeal"). After she makes the bowl of oatmeal she asks, "What happens next?" Someone from the circle then suggests a new action for the person in the middle to perform. The goal is to string the actions together so that they make a coherent story. Any questions? Answer any questions. Great! We will play multiple rounds, but who wants to be in the middle first? Pick volunteer and play a couple rounds.

Good job, guys! Can any of you tell me why we're doing this exercise for the "Don't Explain, Show" rule? Totally! Now this next exercise is kind of like the last one, but we'll play it with four players. Let's all sit facing the front of the room while I explain. Let students sit down. This exercise is called **He Said She Said**. Two people are in the scene, and two people narrate the action of the characters. This one is a little bit more complicated to explain, so I typed up an example script. Can I get four volunteers to get up here and do a demonstration for the rest of the class, please? Let volunteers read the script. Then call on students to play a few rounds of the exercise without a script. The scenes should be longer than the example (they should have a beginning, middle, and end).

Actors in the scenes, how did it feel to have someone else prompt your actions? Narrators, how did it feel to come up with the actions? Did having the narrator remove affect how you acted in your scene? How did it feel to watch as an audience member?

Those are all really great observations! Our last exercise for this rule is called "Fast Forward". In just a second, I'm going to divide you up into groups of three. Each group will take a turn doing the exercise in front of the class. When it's your group's turn to perform, you will be given a relationship and a goal. During the scene, I will call out either "fast forward" or "rewind," and your group will either have to jump forward in time or rewind to a flashback. Any questions? Divide students into groups of three. Do I have any brave souls who want to go first? Let students go up, picking the order if necessary. Each group needs to perform.

Nice work! How did those scenes feel to watch as audience members? How did it feel as improvisers? Why do you think this rule exists?

You guys are doing a great job today. Our last rule for this class period is "Don't Plan." I think that this is actually a really fun rule, so don't be scared. This first exercise is called **Surprise Movement**. When I say, you are going to stand up and start walking around the room. When I say "stop," each of you needs to stop walking and make a sound/movement/gesture/etc. Repeat the gesture until you know what you are (whether it's a cat, dishwasher, tree, whatever). I will then say "go," and you may continue walking until I say "stop" again and you do a new movement. The idea is that you not preconceive, but just let the action happen. There is no wrong way to do this (unless you're planning). Any questions? Let students play until they get into the groove.

Okay, are we all feeling a little more spontaneous? What did you guys struggle with in this activity? Did you discover anything about yourself?

This next exercise is called **Blind Line Offers**. I'm going to number you guys off so that you share a number with only one other person. When I call your number, you will come up to the front of the room. Each person will make a physical and a vocal offer. That means that you will do something physical (like swinging a golf club) while also making a statement ("Gee, I sure can't believe that the Russ finally got his big promotion). It is then your job to justify the offers of both improvisers and figure out what the scene is about. I will stop you when I feel you have done this. Since this is another one that's a bit difficult to explain, I have an example. Can I get two volunteers to come up and demonstrate, please? Let volunteers demonstrate. Then, call out numbers until everyone has gone.

Great! Can anyone tell me how this exercise is teaching us to be spontaneous? How easy was it for you to put both offers together to make a cohesive scene?

*Interesting! Now, I'm pretty excited for the next exercise, because I think it'll be a lot of fun for you guys. This one is called **Emotional Family**, and it's played in groups of four. Put students into groups of four. When your group goes up, you will be given a family activity. Try to establish your characters and relationships quickly, because after you do this, I will freeze the scene. The class will then pick one of the characters and endow them with an emotion that the character will suddenly be overcome with. The scene then unfreezes and continues (with the added emotion). We will freeze four times, endowing a character with an emotion each time. It is the improvisers' jobs to justify their emotion in the scene. Any questions? Do exercise so that each group gets a turn.*

Way to commit, guys. How did being endowed with an emotion mid-scene affect you as an actor? Did you ever catch yourself planning? Did your plan ever take a different turn than expected?

Standards:

Can someone tell me something we did that addressed 3 b today?

Create 3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

How about 1 a and b?

Perform 1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3.

Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Lastly, 2 b?

CR 2 b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Reflection:

Questions for reflection:

What was your guys' favorite exercise of the day? How do you think trust affects improve scenes? What about scripted scenes? How do you think last week's rules play into this week's rules? What's the biggest thing you struggled with this class?

Excellent. You guys did great again. Next class we will be going over the last three rules. Once again, please come to class dressed appropriately and ready to have some fun! Don't forget, we have our final performance coming up. Not next class, but the one after. Please see me if you have any questions. See you all next class!

Supporting Materials for Third Lesson

“He Said She Said” Example:

Actor A: I think I’ll go for a run today.

Narrator A: He said as he tripped over his jogging shoes.

(Actor A trips over jogging shoes)

Actor B: You’re such a klutz.

Narrator B: She said as she dropped her glass of water.

(Actor B drops glass of water)

NY Times Article

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/23/arts/upright-citizens-brigade-writes-its-book-on-improv.html?_r=0

Is there anything improv can't do?

Besides helping produce stars like Stephen Colbert and Tina Fey, improv theaters now run business workshops and train the kind of actors who once would have gone to Juilliard or Yale. For the first time, the hosts of both "The Tonight Show" and "Late Night" have an improv background.

The origins of the current improv boom can be traced to 1999, when the Upright Citizens Brigade opened its first theater. Back then, there were no permanent stages devoted to improvisational comedy in New York. Now there are three. With a bustling school (2,500 students enrolled) helping to underwrite its prolific productions, the Brigade, whose alumni include the stars of Comedy Central's new sketch show "Broad City" and Sasheer Zamata, the newest cast member of "Saturday Night Live," has become the most influential name in improv today.

At the start, you needed to take a class to learn the method. No longer. After seven years of work, the troupe has codified its aesthetic and released "The Upright Citizens Brigade Comedy Improvisation Manual." Far from the first improv guide, it is, however, the most practical, concrete and unapologetically prescriptive. The manual offers insights and helps aspiring comedians, but its authoritative approach has also drawn criticism.

"We wanted this to be the clearest book," said Ian Roberts, one of three authors, along with his fellow founding Upright Citizens Brigade members Matt Besser and Matt Walsh. (The fourth founder, Amy Poehler, didn't write, Mr. Roberts said with a hearty laugh over the phone, "Because Amy's incredibly more successful than we are.")

While improv manuals don't have as long a history as those about acting, many such books have been important, including Viola Spolin's trailblazing "Improvisation for the Theater," which influenced the original members of the Second City troupe in Chicago. The classic text for modern long-form improv was written by Del Close, a legend in the field, along with Charna Halpern and Kim Johnson.

That book, "Truth in Comedy" (1994), mixes jargon-filled teaching, anecdotes and celebrities waxing poetic about the magic of improv. In the foreword, Mike Myers calls the book "the Zen approach to comedy." Close argued that long-form improvisation was not only a means to develop material but also an end in itself, an art form deserving its own respect.

It's part of the reason that the Upright Citizens Brigade venerates Close. But while the troupe adopted many of his ideas, the new manual has a style that fits today's increasingly professionalized comedy scene. Instead of talk of magic or Zen, it favors a dry, down-to-earth tone.

"There is a common misconception that improv is a whimsical or lazy art form," the authors write in the introduction. "In reality, no matter how much fun they are having onstage, great improvisers are working together while adhering to a clear set of guidelines." With that emphasis, the manual implicitly argues that the gulf between improvisation and scripted comedy is not as vast as the audience imagines.

All long-form improvisation shares conventions and structures that limit choices. The manual also has many prohibitions: Don't talk about the past or the future, for instance, and don't talk about people who aren't there. While it says that sometimes you can break rules, the manual's ethos, telegraphed on almost every page, encourages otherwise.

"You have to teach people technique and principles and rules that they can practice and that allow inspiration to come out," said Mr. Roberts, who is also a show runner for the Comedy Central sketch series "Key & Peele." He added that while the Upright Citizens Brigade trains performers, it's even better for writers. "We are diametrically opposed to those who say you just need to stop thinking so much, just let it go and be free."

Mr. Roberts added with emphasis: "We're not making up something. We're explaining something that's there. It's like principles of physics."

One of the surprising aspects of the book may be the limited role of "yes, and," the one improv rule that has gone mainstream: the idea that a performer should agree with the information provided by a scene partner and add to it. It's positive advice that could be applicable to dates and business meetings. But the manual clarifies and circumscribes this often misunderstood concept, pointing out that it's only important at a scene's beginning to establish a "base reality": who the characters are, what they're doing and where.

After quickly setting up these elements (a couple in bed after a one-night stand is an example used often in the book), improvisers move to the core of the Brigade aesthetic: the game of the scene, which creates the central comic pattern. The game begins after the improviser says something unusual, then the partner asks himself if that unusual thing is true. If the character says the one-night stand took a long time, for instance, the partner might then wonder if the character fears commitment.

If "yes, and" sets up the real engine of the comedy, "if then" should escalate as the scene progresses, becoming increasingly more absurd and heightening the comedy. Mr. Roberts said this structure is central not just to improv but also to movie comedy and sketch television. "In 'Liar Liar,' there's a guy who lies a lot," he said. "If he can no longer lie, what would happen? That's a game."

The game is now as associated with the Upright Citizens Brigade as method acting was with the Group Theater. The result is propulsive, quick comedy. "It's joke heavy, fast and funny," said TJ Jagodowski, half of the improv team behind the show "TJ and Dave," which specializes in a slower, more idiosyncratic comedy. (They have also just written a book about improv, which Mr. Jagodowski said is not instructional.) The Brigade approach is "also more product oriented," he said. "It's that this new line has a purpose, and it's to get a laugh."

This hints at a broader criticism that the rules of a game limit its creative scope, making for rigid, homogeneous comedy. One of the most forceful critics of improvisation rules is Mick Napier, the founder of the Annoyance Theater, which offers classes in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and has plans to open a New York theater.

If the Upright Citizens Brigade interpretation of Close is like the Group Theater translating the acting theories of Stanislavski, then Mr. Napier plays the role of David Mamet, a provocateur who dismissed most acting teachers (including Stanislavski) as frauds. Mr. Napier, in his 2004 book, "Improvise," unleashes a broadside against rules, arguing that they don't make for good scenes. "They are

destructive,” he writes, adding later, “They help people think in a particular way, and that way of thinking is often death to good improvisation.”

Mr. Roberts, though, disagreed: “That’s preposterous. It shows a disrespect for improvisation. Would you tell someone to drive a car that way? To approach ballet that way?”

Mr. Napier argues that great improvisation derives from a more childlike part of the psyche, not the muscle memory needed for ballet or driving. “You have to tap into the part of you that plays,” he said, “and the part of you that’s always thinking and adhering to rules and hierarchy and constructs and order and logic is not the part that an audience enjoys.”

The debate over rules matters little to one segment of the readership that the Upright Citizens Brigade manual hopes to reach: those who don’t have access to comedy classes.

The first experiment was Michael Stanford, a 27-year-old app designer from Poplar Bluff, Mo., a town of less than 18,000 people near the Ozarks. After seeing Upright Citizens Brigade members performing on Netflix early last year, he emailed Mr. Besser asking for advice. Mr. Besser responded with an advance copy of the book and a deal: If Mr. Stanford practiced twice a week based on the methods in the book, the Brigade would let him perform at its annual Del Close Marathon.

Mr. Stanford promptly recruited five friends, including a married couple and a guy in sales, and got to work. They improvised in his living room, tackling one chapter per rehearsal. Three months later, Mr. Stanford was getting laughs at a Sunday afternoon show at the Brigade’s stage in Chelsea. Mr. Roberts said Mr. Stanford was “as good as anyone would have been” after two introductory courses.

Plenty of Brigade alumni say that its approach is freeing and perhaps more flexible than it looks. “The U.C.B. taught me all the rules,” said Rob Corddry, the former “Daily Show” correspondent who created Adult Swim’s Emmy-winning “Childrens Hospital.” “And when I had them down, they taught me how to break them.”

For some, like Mr. Stanford, the manual is about more than rules. It’s an inspiration. Once he returned to Poplar Bluff, the troupe he created broke up, but now he’s writing a screenplay and driving three hours to Springfield, Mo., every weekend for an improv class that he said focuses less on the game.

“I like to exist in a silly place for a few hours every week and not be myself,” he said, adding that he wants to join the many trying to make a career out of making people laugh. “This book changed my life.”

Fourth Lesson

Your Name: Samantha Black

Unit Title: Improv Your Life

Lesson Title: Third Three Lessons

Time Frame: 50 minutes

Necessary Materials: Comfortable clothing, music and speaker, seven random objects

Prior Content Knowledge: Students have learned projection, diction, blocking basics, and cold-reading from scripts. Students have also received an overview of the nine rules of improv. Students have spent class time studying “Always Say Yes”, “Who, What, Where?”, “DO SOMETHING”, “Trust Your Partner”, “Don’t Explain, Show”, and “Don’t Plan” rules.

New Content Knowledge: Students will begin learning the “No Fighting”, “Make Statements” and “Have Fun” rules.

Desired Results

Established Goals:

Create:

3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

Perform:

1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Critically Respond:

2 a. Critique and evaluate artistic choices and personal reactions to dramatic presentations using guidelines for evaluating a theatrical production;

b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Essential Questions/Global:

How does knowing the rules give an improviser power in their scenes?

Essential Questions/Content Area:

Why are the three rules listed above important to learn if one wants to be good at improvising?

How do these new rules fit in with the rules learned in the last class period?

Students Will Understand:

Students will understand that learning the rules builds a solid foundation (and that to break the rules you have to first know the rules).

Students Will Be Able:

Students will be able to build trust between themselves and their peers through different exercises. Students will also be able to avoid the pitfalls of arguing and asking too many questions in a scene.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: Students will discuss why they think the three new rules are important to learn. We will also talk about how these rules still tie into the first six rules. Students will provide

scenarios that these rules are useful in improv and/or other situations.

Summative Assessment: At the end of the unit, students will perform in multiple improv scenes demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the rules. Students will also take a short quiz.

Reflection: In today's exercises, what came naturally and what did students struggle with? Why? Were students able to successfully integrate the new rules into their performances while still employing what we learned last class period?

Learning Plan

Direct Instruction:

Hello everyone! How are we all doing today? Are you guys excited to learn the last three rules of improv today?

Like the last two periods, we will be doing zero desk work, so I need you all to push everything back and circle up in the center of the room for stretching.

Lead students in stretching.

*Is everyone nice and limber? I'm feeling a little tricky today, so we're going to do a warmup that involves a bit of math. I call this exercise **Odd One Out**. When I start playing the music, you will all start walking around the room (you can dance, have fun). When I stop the music, I will call out a simple math equation (like $2+2$ or $5x1$). You then need to get into groups that consist of the answer to the math problem (ie a group of 4 or 5). If you find yourself without a group, you have to shout "I am the odd one out!" while doing a dance of your choice. Once the music starts again, you may continue walking around until it stops and you form groups once again. We will play a few rounds. Any questions? Play a few rounds until students are warmed up.*

Great! Now, we only have three rules left to cover today. Who can tell me what they are? Let students answer. Give hints if needed. That's right! We're going to start today off with the "No Fighting" rule. Can someone tell me why they think this rule will be important to learn?

*Exactly! The first exercise that we're doing is called **Leave for a Reason**. This exercise is to be done in total silence. When I say "go," you will all begin walking around the room. As a group, you will need to find a reason to "leave the room." Since I can't actually send you out of the classroom, we will consider crossing this line at the back of the room "leaving the room." All players should leave at the same time, and the reason why you are leaving should be clear to everyone. Remember, there is no talking. Any questions? Answer any questions. Okay. Ready? Go!*

Let students play until they find a reason to collectively leave the room.

How was that exercise for you guys? How did you all eventually figure out how/why to leave the room? Did you struggle with not being able to talk? Why? How do you think that this exercise applies to the "No Fighting" rule?

*This next exercise is called **Commercial**. Let's all sit down facing the front of the room. Give students a second to get situated. I have brought with me seven random objects. Based off of the name of the*

exercise, what do you guys think we'll be doing? Students should be able to guess. That's right! I'm going to divide you into pairs. As a team, each pair will come up and perform an infomercial where they try to convince me to pick up the phone and buy the random object that they will be given. Remember, you and your partner are working together. No arguing allowed. Any questions? Answer any questions. Ask for pairs to volunteer or pick pairs until everyone has had a chance to go. I don't know about you guys, but I'm in the mood to spend some money.

Now we're going to take it up a notch. You will be working in groups of three (that I will pick), and this time you will have a problem to solve. This exercise is called "Call from Charlie". This may be too old of a reference, but do any of you know who Charlie's Angels are? Let student explain if anyone knows. Well, they're characters from an old TV show and then later a movie. Basically, they're three women who fight crime for their secretive, private boss, Charlie (whom they've never met in person). Charlie would call them up with a mission, and then they would have to go and fix the problem. In this exercise, you guys are not the women from Charlie's Angels; you're Charlie's new top team. Before the scene starts, the audience will give you a suggestion of the mission you need to complete for Charlie. The scene will start with you receiving a phone call from Charlie and will end once you've found a solution. Remember. The rule we're focusing on right now is "No Fighting". Divide students into groups of three. Let groups go up and play until every group has had a turn.

Good job, guys! Those were really nice scenes. Before today, how easy or hard did you think the "No Fighting" rule would be to follow? Did your assumptions turn out to be true? Why do you think we avoid fighting? Is it possible to still have an interesting scene that doesn't revolve around conflict between the two main characters?

*The second to last rule we're going to cover is "Make Statements". The first exercise that we're going to play may seem counter-intuitive, but it is called **Without Question**. We'll stay in your Call from Charlie teams for this one. In your groups, two people will be in the scene while one person acts as the audience. The person watching will give the improvisers a suggestion containing a relationship and a goal. The improvisers will then perform a short scene (1-2 minutes) where they try to accomplish the goal without asking any questions. The groups will rotate who watches/performs until all three people have done a scene with each person in their group. Any questions? Get them in now! Answer any questions. Alright! Each group can find a spot in the room and get started! When your group is done, please put your hand on your head so I know you're finished. Walk around room and work with groups individually.*

Awesome! How did you guys think that went? Did you find that you ask more questions than you realized? How did not asking questions change the momentum of the scenes? Why do you think we want to avoid asking too many questions while performing improv?

*The other exercise that we're playing to practice "Make Statements" is called **Who Where Why Am I**. Each round we will pick one person to leave the room. While that person waits outside, as a class we will provide:*

Where the scene is and when (era) it is

Who the improviser is portraying (either a person or a profession)

A problem that person has.

Ex: Britney Spears has time traveled back to Russia in the 1950s and needs to get back to present day.

We will then pick an additional 2-3 people to be in the scene. They will go onstage and get in place, and then the person outside will come in. By the end of the scene, the odd person out will have to figure out the three given circumstances the class picked out without asking any questions. We'll play this a couple different times, and everyone is expected to participate in at least one scene. Any questions? Let students play until everyone has gone.

What did you guys think of that activity? How do you think the scene would have gone if the odd person out was allowed to ask questions? As an audience member, which way do you prefer?

Now this last rule is actually my favorite rule. Have fun! I know that we've been stressing the importance of learning the rules and techniques of improv, but I want you guys to remember that it's supposed to be fun. We're playing onstage with character and story. It's practically impossible to have a "perfect" improv scene, so remember: if you're having fun, the audience probably is too. So now we're just going to do a few exercises, and I want you guys to not worry so much about following the rules. Focus on having fun and being in the moment. Exercises and the descriptions:

Make More Interesting: *Divide students up into groups of three. Have them go onstage and give them the who/what/where of the scene. The scene starts, and every time I clap my hands, the performer has to make the action that proceeded the clap more interesting (bigger, bolder, etc.) without advancing the scene (kind of like "Change"). After the second clap, the performer is allowed to advance the scene. Do exercise until every group has gone.*

Typewriter: *Students stay in their groups of three. One student is the Narrator and has a mimed typewriter. The narrator starts the scene by reading aloud from the book that they are typing. After setting up the scene with a few sentences, the actors take over and portray the characters/action that the narrator has set up. The narrator is allowed to step in at any time with flashbacks, new characters, different location, etc.*

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Advice: *Have volunteers go up in groups of three. The audience provides a question or problem that they need advice on. The three players then go down the line. One person provides the good advice, the next provides the bad, and the last the ugly (really bad) advice.*

Okay, great, you guys! I don't know if you all noticed, but how did it feel not stopping to talk about each exercise after we did it? Did it help you get into an improv groove? Did you find yourself still thinking about the rules even though they were not the focus?

Great! Now let's take a look and make sure that we met the standards today.

Standards:

Can someone tell me how we addressed 3 b today?

Create 3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

How about 1 a and b?

Perform 1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Lastly, 2 b?

CR 2 b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Reflection:

Awesome! How do you guys think today went?

Questions for reflection:

What was your guys' favorite exercise of the day? Who can give me two rules and an example of how they work together (get a couple of different answers)? How do these rules still work with scripted scenes? What about with life in general? What about scripted scenes? What was the hardest rule to learn? The easiest? Why?

*As you know for our final improv class next week, we will put on a show for the choir and art classes that are also during this period. When you come in, you will take your test for the first fifteen minutes, and then we will invite your classmates in. We won't be learning any new exercises; you guys will be performing ones that we have already done. We will be playing **Freeze, Call from Charlie, Fast Forward, Who Where Why Am I, Emotional Family, Typewriter, and Change**. Because we only have a limited amount of time, we're going to pick who performs what exercises right now. Students are expected to participate any all exercises that involve the whole class and at least one exercise that involves just a small group of performers. Okay, do we all feel good about this? Great!*

Good work today, guys! Remember, attendance next class is absolutely mandatory, as there is no way to make up this grade, and it is your final for this unit. Any final questions? Cool! Have a good day, and I will see you all next class!

Supporting Materials for Fourth Lesson

None

Fifth Lesson

Your Name: Samantha Black

Unit Title: Improv Your Life

Lesson Title: Grand Finale

Time Frame: 50 minutes

Necessary Materials: Comfortable clothing, final test, order of exercises/participants

Prior Content Knowledge: Students have learned projection, diction, blocking basics, and cold-reading from scripts. Students have spent class time studying all nine rules of improv.

New Content Knowledge: No new content this class; this will be the final assessment for the improv unit.

Desired Results

Established Goals:

Create:

3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

Perform:

1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Critically Respond:

2 a. Critique and evaluate artistic choices and personal reactions to dramatic presentations using guidelines for evaluating a theatrical production;

b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

Essential Questions/Global:

How can one take the lessons learned in this unit and apply them to other areas of life?

Essential Questions/Content Area:

How does getting in front of a live audience affect one's improv performance?

How easy is it to apply the rules in a live performance situation?

Students Will Understand:

Students will understand that learning the rules of improv gives them the tools to perform in front of an audience and not worry about failing.

Students Will Be Able:

Students will be able to work together as a team and perform improv in front of peers from a different class while still following the rules we have learned in class.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: Students will discuss how they think the performance went and why.

Summative Assessment: Students will perform eight improv exercises in front of their peers and be graded on their attempts at following the rules as well as their overall attitude.

Reflection: How did being in front of a live audience affect the students? Did having the rules make them feel like they had more control of the situation? What did they succeed at? What needs more work?

Learning Plan

Direct Instruction:

Good morning, everybody! How are well all today? Are you guys excited to perform? Let students answer. You guys are going to do great. First, though, we have a test that we need to get out of the way. Everybody get out a pencil or pen. Pass tests out. I think that the test is pretty self-explanatory; it should look very similar to the test we took at the beginning of the unit. You have about fifteen minutes to complete it. If you finish early, you can read or work on other homework quietly.

Let students work on the test for about fifteen minutes.

Cool! It looks like everybody is done. Pass your tests to the left for me to pick up, please, and then make a circle in the center of the room for stretching.

Lead students in stretches and a quick game of **Doors** to warm up.

I think you guys are ready! I'm going to call Mrs. Smith and let her know that we are ready for her. While I do that, I need you guys to push the desks into a semi-circle facing the front of the room. Leave enough space for you guys to sit in front of them while you are not performing. Mrs. Smith's class will be sitting in the desks. Remember, the order of the exercises and who is in what is written on the board, so if you forget what comes next or what you're in, you can just look up there. Call Mrs. Smith while the students arrange. When Mrs. Smith arrives with her class, give announcement.

Hey guys! I need you all to find a desk to sit at. Thank you all for coming; I'm so excited to show you guys what we have been working on. Today you will be watching some improv exercises and scenes. Sometimes I may ask you guys for suggestions, so please feel free to be creative! Just keep it above the waist and school appropriate. I also need you guys to remember that improv is not easy, so I expect you to support your peers by giving them your full attention and respect. Any questions? Great! Let's start the show!

Students should basically be able to run the show themselves, but I will step in if they forget what comes next or who is in which scene. Since it is a performance situation, I will not be giving any guidance during the scenes unless it is absolutely necessary. Let improvisers bow at the end.

Alright, let's give our improvisers a hand! Thank you to Mrs. Smith for letting your class come and watch; I hope you guys had fun. Let Mrs. Smith's class leave.

Reflection:

Okay! How do you guys think that went? Did anything throw you for a loop? Why? What was your biggest success and why? Was it different being in front of a live audience? How successful were you at incorporating the rules? Do you think you'll use these rules in other areas of your life? How/why?

Standards:

Alright, last but not least, let's make sure that we met the standards. Can someone give me some examples of how we met 3 b today and during this unit?

Create 3 b. Develop improvisation skills through games, and make, accept, and extend offers in improvisation

How about 1 a and b?

Perform 1 a. Rehearse and perform a scripted or improvised scene

b. Use previously acquired skills to demonstrate the ability to rehearse and exhibit the following: 1. Original works, scripted plays, scenes, and monologues; 2. Ensemble works; 3. Improvisation and purposeful movement; 4. Vocal control; 5. Design and media; 6. Public speaking

Lastly, 2 b?

CR 2 b. Investigate and compare common themes among theatre, various art forms, and content areas

You guys did a great job with this unit, and I'm so proud of you all. Any final comments? Alright! Again, good job! I will see you guys next class when we start on play script analysis. Have a good day!

Supporting Materials for Fifth Lesson

Order of Exercises:

Freeze

Participants:

Call from Charlie

Participants:

Fast Forward

Participants:

Who Where Why Am I

Participants:

Emotional Family

Participants:

Typewriter

Participants:

Change.

Participants:

Work Sample V
Pre-Assessment, Post-Assessment, and Performance Rubric

Name: _____
Date: _____

Improv Pre-Assessment

Fill in the blank:

List the nine most important rules of improvisation (2 points each):

- 1) Al_w__s__ay__Y
- 2) W_o__ha__Wh__e
- 3) Do__met__ing
- 4) Tr_s__Y__r__ar__ner
- 5) Do_'t Ex_l__n, __how
- 6) __n't P__n
- 7) D__'t F__ht
- 8) M_k__St__em__nt__
- 9) H_V__U__

Name at least one theatre famous for its improv (1 point):

What is the scariest thing about improv to you (2 points)?

Name three famous people known for their improvisation skills (2 points):

How do you think improv can help you in other areas of your life? (2 points)

Name: _____
Date: _____

Improv Pre-Assessment Key

List the nine most important rules of improvisation:

- 1) Always Say Yes
- 2) Why, What, Where
- 3) Do SOMETHING
- 4) Trust Your Partner
- 5) Don't Explain, Show
- 6) Don't Plan
- 7) Don't Fight
- 8) Make Statements
- 9) Have Fun

Name at least one theatre famous for its improv:

Upright Citizen's Brigade, Groundlings, Second City

What is the scariest thing about improv to you?

Any answer is correct as long as it is fully explained.

Name three famous people known for their improvisation skills:

Students will receive points as long as they have made at least an educated guess.

How do you think improv can help you in other areas of your life?

Students will receive full credit if they give a thoughtful and well-written answer.

Name: _____
Date: _____

Improv Post-Assessment

List the nine most important rules of improvisation (2 points each):

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)

Name at least one theatre famous for its improv (1 point):

What do you think is the MOST important rule to remember while improvising? Why? (2 points)

What was the hardest part of doing improv for you? Why? (2 points)

Pick two rules and explain how they work together. (2 points)

Name: _____
Date: _____

Improv Post-Assessment Key

List the nine most important rules of improvisation:

- 1) Always Say Yes
- 2) Why, What, Where
- 3) Do SOMETHING
- 4) Trust Your Partner
- 5) Don't Explain, Show
- 6) Don't Plan
- 7) Don't Fight
- 8) Make Statements
- 9) Have Fun

Name at least one theatre famous for its improv:

Upright Citizen's Brigade, Groundlings, Second City

What do you think is the MOST important rule to remember while improvising? Why?

Any answer is correct as long as it is one of the nine rules and it is fully explained.

What was the hardest part of doing improv for you?

Students will receive points as long as they have given a thoughtful response.

How do you think improv can help you in other areas of your life?

Students will receive full credit as long as they pick two rules we've studied in class and can fully justify their answer.

Rubric to be filled out after the final improv performance. Students will be graded based on their growth from the beginning of the unit to the end as well as on their final performance and overall attitude.

Follows the 9 Rules ___/10	Needs Work Student only follows one or two of the rules in their improv scenes. 0-2	Making Progress Student follows some of the rules in their improv scenes 3-6.	Good Student follows most of the rules in their improv scenes. 7-8	Excellent Student follows all of the rules in their improv scenes. 9-10
Interaction w/Teammates ___/10	Needs Work Student makes little to no effort to be a team player or support their peers while in a scene. 0-2	Making Progress Student is sometimes a team player and occasionally supports their peers while in a scene. 3-6	Good Student is a team player and mostly supports their peers while in a scene. 7-8	Excellent Student is a team player and fully supports their peers while in a scene. 9-10
Attitude ___/10	Needs Work Student rarely/never volunteers and/or regularly has poor attitude in class. 0-2	Making Progress Student rarely volunteers and/or student only maintains good attitude during class sometimes. 3-6	Good Student volunteers to participate sometimes and maintains a good attitude during class. 7-8	Excellent Student volunteers to participate regularly and maintains a good attitude during class. 9-10
Final Quiz Grade ___/10	Needs Work Scored between 0-20% 0-2	Making Progress Scored between 30-60% 3-6	Good Scored between 70-80% 7-8	Excellent Scored between 90-100% 9-10

Total: ___/40

Work Sample VI
Analysis of Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment

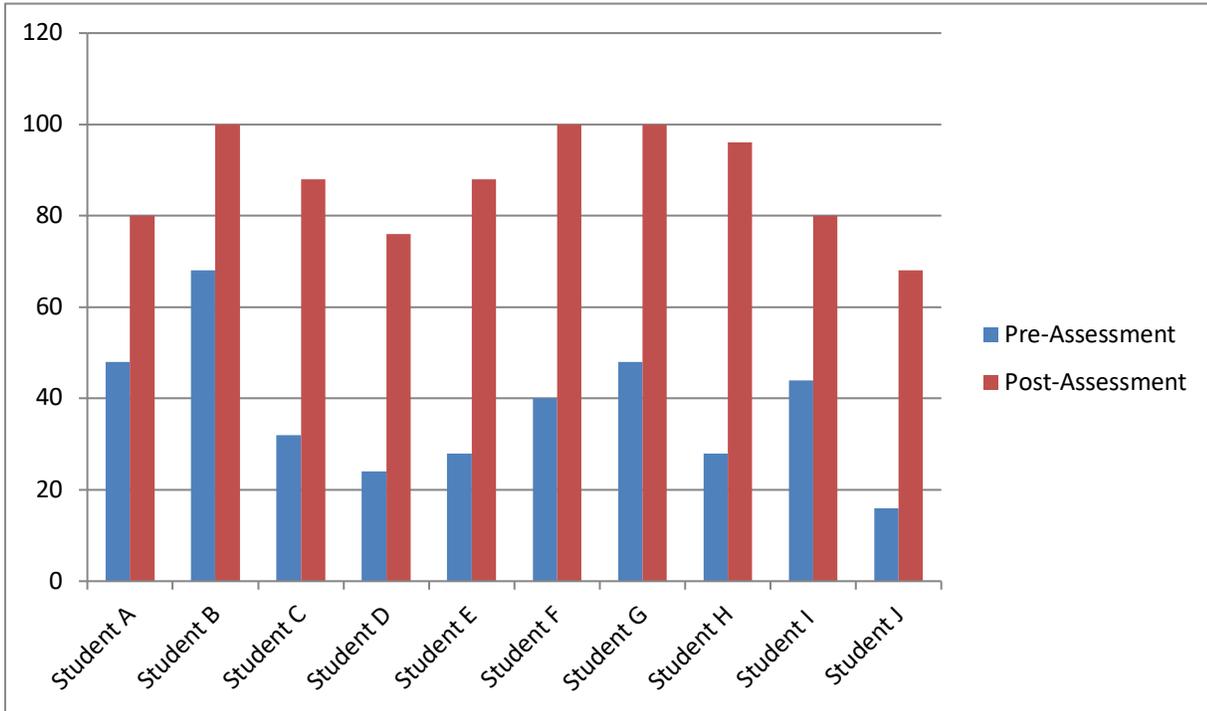
Pre-Assessment Scores

Student	Score (/25)	Percentage
Student A	12/25	48%
Student B	17/25	68%
Student C	8/25	32%
Student D	6/25	24%
Student E	7/25	28%
Student F	10/25	40%
Student G	12/25	48%
Student H	7/25	28%
Student I	11/25	44%
Student J	4/25	16%

Post-Assessment Scores

Student	Score (/25)	Percentage
Student A	20/25	80%
Student B	25/25	100%
Student C	22/25	88%
Student D	19/25	76%
Student E	22/25	88%
Student F	25/25	100%
Student G	25/25	100%
Student H	24/25	96%
Student I	20/25	80%
Student J	17/25	68%

Graph Representation of Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Scores



Analysis of Pre-Assessment

The pre-assessment is a fill-in-the-blank/written assessment. The first nine questions are fill-in-the-blanks of the rules of improv that we will be covering in class. Though we have not studied the rules yet, the given letters should be a good hint for students to use (along with their previous knowledge from other units). The next four questions require short-answer responses. It is unlikely that they will know the answer to the 10th question, but it is information that they will eventually know. The 11th question is subjective and can be answered in many different ways. There are many, many answers that are acceptable on the 12th question (as long as it is someone who I can confirm has an improv background). The last question is another subjective question that just requires a thoughtful answer. The pre-assessment is out of 25 points, but it will not have any influence on the students' final grade.

The pre-assessment is administered on the first day of the unit before the lecture has begun. Students should need roughly 10 minutes to complete it. These questions are about content and will tie into relevancy later in the unit. The pre-assessment will also help me determine the comfort levels of individual students as well as any prior knowledge. The pre-assessment will help the students, because it will be a good guideline to show them the things in the unit that they need to focus on the most.

The scores on this assessment show a fairly large range of prior knowledge of improv. The lowest score was a 16% while the highest score was a 68%, while the majority of the students scored between 7 and 12 (out of 25) points. Most of the points received came from the short answers that did not require much prior knowledge. Other students were able to guess some of the rules using the hints given along with their own prior knowledge/common sense. These scores show me how much I will have to define each term and rule as well as how quickly we will be able to move through the unit.

Analysis of Post-Assessment

For the post-assessment, I kept much of the pre-assessment the same. This time, however, I removed the fill-in-the-blank hints from the nine rules and replaced them with empty spaces. I kept the 10th question the same. Even though we did not spend a ton of time talking about famous improv theatres, we did read an article on the UCB that the students were expected to pay attention to. The last three questions are short-answers that require a little bit of content knowledge combined with critical thinking and the students' own personal experiences during the improv unit. The content questions are useful to be, because it allows me to see how much knowledge the students were able to retain. The self-reflection questions are helpful, because it gives the students an opportunity to think about their experience and digest it, and it gives me an opportunity to see what can be change/improved upon the next time that I do this unit.

The post-assessment is administered on the final day of the unit before the students have done their final performance. It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. It is a part of their final grade and is included on the rubric. The first part of the assignment is graded on accuracy, while the second part is graded on relevancy and effort.

I was definitely pleased with the scores that my students received on the post-assessment. Most of the scores were above 80%, which shows a huge amount of growth in a short period of time. Even the students who scored lower-than-average showed a lot of improvement compared to where they started. Students lost the most points in the first section (which was graded as either right or wrong with very little grey area). To improve students' scores in the future, I will spend more time reviewing the rules all at once so that the students get more practice.

Understanding by Design

Title of Unit	Improv Your Life	Grade Level	9-12
Curriculum Area	Theatre	Time Frame	50 minutes
Developed By	Samantha Black		
Stage 1: Identify Desired Results			
Established Goals			
<p>Established Goals What Relevant goals (e.g., content standards, course or program objectives, learning outcomes) will this design address?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Expression, imagination, and appreciation in group dynamics 2. Perform <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate meaning to engage an audience 3. Critically Respond <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Evaluation of elements of drama, dramatic techniques, and theatrical conventions 			
Individual Lesson Objectives			
Lesson 1: Intro to Improv			
<p>Students will discuss how improv is relevant to the entertainment industry Students will learn about the nine rules of improv Students will begin to consider how the rules of improv can affect their own lives Create 3b; CR 2a, b</p>			
Lesson 2:			
<p>Students will learn the first three improv rules in depth Students will demonstrate the first three rules in action Students will reflect on how the first three rules are important Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b</p>			
Lesson 3:			
<p>Students will learn the next three rules of improv Students will demonstrate the rules in action Students will reflect on how the first set of rules combine with the second set Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b</p>			
Lesson 4:			
<p>Students will learn the last three rules of improv Students will demonstrate the rules in action Students will reflect on how all nine rules work together to make good improv Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b</p>			
Lesson 5:			
<p>Students will show understanding of the rules by taking their final exam Students will demonstrate use of the rules during an improv performance in front of their peers</p>			

<p>Students will reflect on how the rules of improv apply to theatre and life outside of theatre Create: 3b; Perform: 1a, b; CR: 2a, b</p>	
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
<i>Students will understand that...</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the big ideas? The main idea emphasized in this unit is how important the rules of improv are. When improvising, they give an improviser a safety net and a way to rescue a scene if they feel it is failing. They also help the improviser interact with their team in the best way possible. Students will also be able to use the rules outside of improv in their own lives. - What specific understandings about them are desired? Students should have a clear understanding of the nine rules of improv and what they do. Students should understand how to use them in their own improv scenes as well as in acting outside of improv. Students should also understand the specific ways that they can apply the rules to their own lives. 	<p>Why is theatre live, and what are the benefits of live theatrical performance?</p> <p>Why is improv a valuable skill and how can it be translated into everyday life?</p> <p>Why do we need rules in improv?</p> <p>Can the skills learned in improv be applied to other parts of theatre?</p> <p>Why is it so important to “say yes” during a scene?</p> <p>How does trust between improvisers affect an improv scene?</p> <p>What is “good” improv and what is “bad” improv?</p>
Related Misconceptions	
<p>The two biggest misconceptions about improv are that it's only about being funny and that there are no rules. A surprising number of people don't understand that improv takes skill and years of learning and practice, and performers are able to build whole careers off of improv.</p>	<p>How does a live audience affect an improv performance?</p> <p>How do the rules work together to create good scenes?</p>
Knowledge <i>Students will know...</i>	Skills <i>Students will be able to...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit? Students will know the basic rules of how to create a good improv scene, and they will know how to apply these rules to both improv and other parts of life. 	<p>Students will be able to perform improvised scenes reflecting content, character and plot. Students will be able to name the rules and explain why they are important. At the end of the unit, students will be able to perform a select number of improv exercises for their peers without any coaching from me.</p>

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence	
Performance Tasks:	
Exercises:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the desired understandings? Lesson One: Discussion of improv video/pre-assessment and “Yes, and” game - Lesson Two: Review Yes, Accepting Circle, and Once Upon a Time (1st rule) 3 Lines, Alphabet Game, and Doors (2nd rule) Freeze, Crisis Situation, Change (3rd rule) - Lesson Three: Trust falls and Blind Lead (4th rule) What Happens Next, He Said She Said, Fast Forward (5th rule) Surprise Movement, Blind Line Offers, and Emotional Family (6th rule) - Lesson Four: Leave for a Reason, Commercial, Call from Charlie (7th rule) Without Question and Who Where Why Am I (8th rule) Make More Interesting, Typewriter, The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly Advice Lesson Five: Freeze, Call from Charlie, Fast Forward, Who Where Why Am I, Emotional Family, Typewriter, Change (all rules) - By what criteria will performances of understanding be judged? The performances will be judged based on effort and growth. Since it is beginning improv, the students are not expected to be experts and able to follow the rules during every single scene. If they have a good attitude, put forth the effort, learn the rules, and participate, students should have no issue passing the unit. Students’ post-assessment will also be graded. 	
Other Evidence:	
Students will show an understanding of improv from participating in group discussions. We will discuss and reflect on each exercise after it has been done to ensure that students fully understand why some things did work and why some things didn’t. We will also read an article on the UCB and discuss that in class.	
Stage 3: Learning Plan	
Where are your students headed? Where have they been? How will you make sure the students know where they are going?	The students are headed towards being more confident performers. Most actors doubt themselves, and they will learn through improv to trust their instincts. I will guide them through learning the rules and provide lots of encouragement, because improv is scary.
How will you hook students at the beginning of the unit?	I will hook students by showing how many famous celebrities started out as improvisers and show them a clip of good improv featuring famous actors.

<p>What events will help students experience and explore the big idea and questions in the unit? How will you equip them with needed skills and knowledge?</p>	<p>They will experience the unit by participating in the improv exercises that I have chosen for them. They will learn through doing and making mistakes. They will receive corrections and learn from their peers' experiences as well.</p>
<p>How will you cause students to reflect and rethink? How will you guide them in rehearsing, revising, and refining their work?</p>	<p>We will reflect on each exercise after it has been completed. This will allow students to ask questions and discuss other possible ways they might have handled the scene.</p>
<p>How will you help students to exhibit and self-evaluate their growing skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the unit?</p>	<p>I will have students write a short reflection on their final assessment on how they feel improv has changed their understanding of themselves and performance.</p>
<p>How will you tailor and otherwise personalize the learning plan to optimize the engagement and effectiveness of ALL students, without compromising the goals of the unit?</p>	<p>The best way to tailor the learning plan is to build a strong team environment where the students all encourage each other. If there is a student with special needs, I will work with them on developing their own expectations for the unit while still allowing them to remain part of the group.</p>
<p>How will you organize and sequence the learning activities to optimize the engagement and achievement of ALL students?</p>	<p>I have broken down the rules, and we will study each one individually, gradually working up from the easiest to understand to the hardest. Students will be able to take the skills they learned from the previous lesson and apply them to the next class.</p>

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