

Unit One - Introduction to Drama *Module 1: Basic Skills*

Lesson 5- Improvisation

Introduction:

This lesson is an introduction to acting without a script (improvisation). The job of the actors is to try everything, even if it feels stupid, and to continue trying, even when they fail.

Activities:

Basic: People who have no improvisational experience are more successful with guided improvisation, because the rules are more clear.

Activity 1 - Give one actor a voucher for 1 million dollars. The other actors have 5-10 minutes to persuade the millionaire to give their characters the money. The millionaire may not keep the money, but the improvisation will not end until the money is given away.

Activity 2 - Divide into pairs. One person is a parent and one is a teenager. You are arguing over something the teenager wants to do. The teenager has to try to persuade the parent. The improvisation ends when parent or teenager wins.

Intermediate:

Activity 1 - This activity is often called freeze or switch. The group forms a circle. Two actors go into the middle and begin a scene. Within a minute, someone in the circle says "switch" (or freeze). The person who said switch walks into the circle and taps one of the two actors, replacing him or her by assume exact body posture. Then the new actor in the scene starts a new improvisation that is not related to the previous one. The actor who remained from the first scene accepts the new scene and a new character. This activity is ended by the teacher.

Activity 2 - Two actors assume roles where one person has power over another (for example, a boss and an employee). You have a set of papers with words like pleading, loving or angry written on them. The person of lower power (**A**) starts the scene by asking for something from the person of higher power(**B**). Every 30 seconds, **A** draws a paper with a word and changes his/her behavior to match the verb. The scene ends after five word. Some good words include: pleading, crying, shouting, schmoozing, manipulating, demanding, whispering and loving.

Advanced:

Activity 1 - This activity is often called "adding on". A location with a large potential for conflict is established by the group (for example, a bus stop, a movie theatre, a mall, a playground). An actor goes into the space and mimes objects to establish the space. Other actors join the space one at a time, choosing different characters and conflicts until all students are in the space. A good variation of the game is one where the location of the space is not discussed in advance, it is revealed by the actions of the person who starts the improvisation.

Activity 2 - You break into pairs and each mentally choose an objective (something their character wants). You do not discuss these objectives. The actors start the scene and develop the characters around the objectives. The scene ends when one of the characters achieves his/her objective. Play this game several times with different partners.

Evaluation:

Evaluation for this section will depend upon the experience your group has with improvisation. You may be evaluated on frequency of participation, time on task, and cooperation.