

Class Acts

Youth Educational Performance Series

at the Duke Energy Center for the Arts
- Mahaffey Theater



BAM IMPROV BOOKS, ART & MUSIC FEST!

WEDNESDAY
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Teacher Resource Guide

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FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

Teacher Resource Guide:

BAM Improv!



Standards

ELA 1.R.1.2: Identify the moral of a story

VA.2.C.2.1: Use appropriate decision making skills to meet intended objectives .

DA.2.S.2.1: Demonstrate focus and concentration while listening to instructions and observing others' movement .

ELA 3.R.1.2: Explain a theme in literary text .

ELA 3.R.2.2: Identify the central idea of a story.

VA.3.S.2.2: Follow sequential procedures and techniques to achieve an artistic goal.

ELA.4.R.2.2: Explain how relevant details support the central idea, implied or explicit .

DA.4.S.2.1: Display attention, cooperation, and focus during class and performance .

ELA.5.R.2.2: Explain how relevant details support the central idea(s), implied or explicit .

ELA 5.R.3.2: Summarize a story to include the theme .

Today I will...

- create and build upon various art forms through collective effort with my peers .

I will know I am successful when I can...

- articulate how intelligence and skill are not fixed but rather can be developed through hard work and perseverance .
- collaborate with my classmates to create various art pieces and/or expand on a given idea through exploring improvisation .

GOALS:

Students will:

- Explore and practice sharing and utilizing a growth mindset by creating a collaborative art piece .
- Work together to create a series of improvised uses for various objects using their imaginations and growth mindset

Improv Theater for Students

What is Improv?

Introduction to Improv

Improviseational theater, commonly known as "improv," is a dynamic form of live theater where the entire performance is created on the spot. It involves unscripted and spontaneous scenes, characters, and dialogue. Improv allows actors to think on their feet, encouraging creativity, quick thinking, and collaboration.

Short-form Improv

Short-form improv focuses on creating spontaneous comedy through preset scenarios or "games." Students can relate short-form improv to activities like charades or making up funny songs. These games provide a structured framework for improvisation and are great for beginners.

Long-form Improv

In contrast, long-form improv does not rely on preset games or one-liners. The fundamental unit of long-form improv is the "scene." These scenes usually involve two improvisers, but can also include more actors when space allows. Successful long-form scenes may appear scripted, but they are entirely improvised.

A Brief History of Improv

Historical Roots

Improv has its roots in the *commedia dell'arte* of the 16th century, but modern improvisational theater, as we know it, began to take shape in the mid-1900s. Ensembles like the Compass Players, Second City, and the Committee played a significant role in its development.

Basic Rules of Impro

"Yes, and"

The most fundamental rule in improv is "Yes, and." This means that, no matter what your scene partner says or does, your role is to accept and build upon it. "Yes" signifies agreement with your partner's contribution, and "and" involves adding to it. This rule encourages collaboration and creativity.

 Improv | Yes, and...

Make Choices

Before "yes-anding," establish three key pieces of information: who (the characters you're playing), where (the scene's setting), and what (the central conflict or tension within the scene). These details are the foundation of your improv scene and drive the narrative forward.

Listen Actively

Listening is essential in improv. Since there is no script, your ability to respond effectively depends on your understanding of what's happening in the scene. Active listening ensures that you catch every detail and nuance, allowing for more engaging and coherent scenes.

Get Physical

Improv encourages physicality. Use your body to convey actions, interact with invisible props, and respond to the imagined environment. Physical engagement adds depth and realism to the scenes and enhances the audience's experience.

Teaching Tips

Age-Appropriate Content

Adapt the complexity of games and scenes to suit the age and experience level of your students. Younger students may benefit from simpler scenarios, while older students can handle more intricate and nuanced improvisations.

Encourage Creativity

Foster an environment that celebrates creativity and originality. The beauty of improv lies in its unpredictability and the unique ideas each student brings to the stage.

Supportive Feedback

Provide constructive feedback that focuses on positive aspects of students' performances. Encourage a growth mindset, emphasizing that improv is about learning and improving with each scene.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Emphasize the importance of working as a team. Improv relies on cooperation, so help students develop the ability to adapt, support each other, and contribute to shared narratives.

Practice and Play

Improv is a skill that improves with practice. Encourage students to engage in regular improv sessions, both inside and outside the classroom. Let them explore and have fun with it.

Improv Games

“Not a, But a...”: Drama Activity

“Not a..., but a...” is an improv game where players pass around a random object and make up new uses for it . The objective is to develop flexible thinking by listing as many uses, real or imagined, as possible for an ordinary object . The focus is to let go of fear of judgment or looking for the best answer; any response is correct, as there is no wrong answer as long as a new use is given and the object is passed to the next person .

Directions:

- 1 . Have students sit in a circle on the floor .
 - 2 . Either have a volunteer pull an item from the box or select one yourself .
 - 3 . After choosing an object, hold it and say “This is not a (whatever it really is), but a ... (give it a different function) .
- **For example: if a paper clip was selected from the box, you could say “This is not a paper clip, but a mini marshmallow skewer.” And then the item would be passed to the next person.
- 4 . The item is then passed to the next player and they will in turn provide a new use for the object .

This exercise can continue for several rounds, pulling a new item out of the box each time it has made its way around the circle .

Abstract Art

Abstract art is art that doesn't look like real life. It does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of reality but instead uses shapes, colors, forms, and gestural marks to achieve its effect. The purpose of abstract art is to let the viewer interpret the meaning.

 This 12-Year-Old Has Taken the Art World by Storm

ABSTRACT ART ACTIVITY

Collaborative Circle Painting

Begin with a very large piece of white butcher paper on the floor with cups of various brightly colored paints in the middle . Depending on how many students are in the class, try to have enough paint cups for four students per cup . Each student will have a paintbrush .

Directions:

- 1 . Students will be seated on the floor around the perimeter of the butcher paper .
- 2 . Ask the students to paint either a circle or a dot at their seated space on the paper . (Some students may express that the color paint cup in front of them isn't the color they want; assure them that they will have the opportunity to use all the colors throughout the exercise) .
- 3 . Next, each student will shift one spot over and take whatever different color paint is in front of them and paint another circle or dot . (Helpful tip: when it is time to shift over to the next space, ask students to leave their paintbrush in the paint cup it originated with; that way the paints remain unmuddied as much as possible .)
- 4 . Have students keep moving around the paper, painting circles and dots . (You will need to guide the students on when to move so that they are shifting as a unit) .
- 5 . Once the paper is filled up, remove the paint cups from the middle and either add a few more circles or dots there, or you can add your classroom number, or even have the students sign the middle as the artists of the piece once the paper is dry .
- 6 . Ask for your students' input where the final composition should be hung for all to enjoy .

Discussion:

What was your experience like? (working alongside classmates, sharing the project as a whole, etc .)

Are you surprised at all by how it turned out?

The best part of this growth mindset activity is that no one can foresee how the painting will turn out . There is no correct way or wrong way; it allows students to practice having a growth mindset knowing that however the painting turned out it would be great.

Part of having a growth mentality is letting go of the feeling that everything must be perfect for it to be good . People are sometimes reluctant to try new things because they are afraid of the outcome . They worry that they won't be good enough . This project shows the students that letting go of those fixed mindsets can often result in new skills, ideas, and creations .

Storytelling Through Song

Introduction to Story Songs:

Explain to students that story songs are musical pieces that narrate a tale. They involve a character on a journey with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Identifying a Story Song:

Provide examples of children's songs and guide students to identify story songs. For instance:

- A) Itsy Bitsy Spider (Correct)
- B) Old MacDonald (Not a story song)
- C) Happy Birthday (Not a story song)

Old MacDonald is more of a list; nothing really happens, just a list of animals and noises.

Whereas "Itsy Bitsy Spider" has both a rising and falling action.

▶ [The Itsy Bitsy Spider | Kids Yoga, Music and Mindfulness with Yo Re Mi](#)

Activity 1: Playful Interpretation of "Itsy Bitsy Spider":

Encourage creative movement by having the children act out the journey of the Itsy Bitsy Spider. They can portray being spiders, raindrops, the sun, and the spider again. This activity helps children understand the elements of a story song through physical engagement.

**Additional Activity: Mad Libs Style Script Creation*

1. Mad Libs Style Worksheet: Provide students with the “*Itsy Bitsy Spider*” worksheet with blanks representing different elements of a story (Noun, Noun Plural, Verb Past Tense.). Instruct students to fill in the blanks with their own words to create a script that will narrate the story they imagine based on the *Itsy Bitsy Spider*
2. Story Creation: Students can individually or in pairs fill in the Mad Libs style worksheet to generate their unique script/story inspired by the *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.
3. Script Performance: Have students or groups physically act out their scripts, incorporating the elements they filled in the worksheet. Encourage them to perform in front of the class or in smaller groups, allowing everyone to witness the diverse stories created from the same song.

This activity promotes creativity, understanding of storytelling elements, and physical expression, fostering a deeper connection between the students, the song, and their imaginative interpretations. <https://www.wordblanks.com/mad-libs/actions/pdf.php?id=178459>

Activity 2: Independent Listening and Story Creation:

- Play “Thunder and Lightning” by Johan Strauss without revealing the title to the students.
 ▶ Johann Strauss II - Thunder And Lightning Polka
- Have the class listen together and ask each student to draw or write their interpretation of the story they hear.
- Replay the song repeatedly while the students work on their drawings or writings.
- Afterward, ask students to present their individual stories based on what they heard.
- Alternatively, divide students into small groups to collaboratively create a story inspired by the music.
- Encourage them to share and discuss their stories with the class.

These activities aim to familiarize students with the concept of storytelling through songs, fostering creativity, listening skills, and imagination.