The following recipes, or games, are intended to be used as reference and study for the college course: Improvisation. This format has been set up to help with ease of quick learning and immediate application. *Bon Appétit!*  

- Dan Stone

The [Ligue d'improvisation montréalaise (LIM)](https://www.lim.org) is a league of *improvisational theater* based in [Montreal, Quebec, Canada](https://www.canada.ca).
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FIRST COURSE

READY - SET - GO
The earliest well documented use of improvisational theatre in Eastern history is found in the Atellan Farce of Africa 391 BC. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, commedia dell'arte performers improvised based on a broad outline in the streets of Italy. In the 1890s, theatrical theorists and directors such as the Russian Konstantin Stanislavski and the French Jacques Copeau, founders of two major streams of acting theory, both heavily utilized improvisation in acting training and rehearsal.

Modern

Modern theatrical improvisation games began as drama exercises for children, which were a staple of dramatic education in the early 20th century thanks in part to the progressive education movement initiated by John Dewey in 1916. Some people credit American Dudley Riggs as the first vaudevillian to use audience suggestions to create improvised sketches on stage. Improvisation exercises were developed further by Viola Spolin in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, and codified in her book *Improvisation For The Theater*, the first book that gave specific techniques for learning to do and teach improvisational theater. In the 1970s in Canada, British playwright and director Keith Johnstone wrote *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*, a book outlining his ideas on improvisation, and invented Theatresports, which has become a staple of modern improvisational comedy and is the inspiration for the popular television show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

Spolin influenced the first generation of modern American improvisers at The Compass Players in Chicago, which led to The Second City. Her son, Paul Sills, along with David Shepherd, started The Compass Players. Following the demise of the Compass Players, Paul Sills began The Second City. They were the first organized troupes in Chicago, and the modern Chicago improvisational comedy movement grew from their success.

Many of the current "rules" of comedic improv were first formalized in Chicago in the late 1950s and early 1960s, initially among The Compass Players troupe, which was directed by Paul Sills. From most accounts, David Shepherd provided the philosophical vision of the Compass Players, while Elaine May was central to the development of the premises for its improvisations. Mike Nichols, Ted Flicker, and Del Close were her most frequent collaborators in this regard. When The Second City opened its doors on December 16, 1959, directed by Paul Sills, his mother Viola Spolin began training new improvisers through a series of classes and exercises which became the cornerstone of modern improv training. By the mid-1960s, Viola Spolin's classes were handed over to her protégé, Jo Forsberg, who further developed Spolin's methods into a one-year course, which eventually became The Players Workshop, the first official school of improvisation in the USA. During this time, Forsberg trained many of the performers who went on to star on The Second City stage.
IMPROV RULES

There are no absolute rules in improv but here are some commonly suggested principles:

- Listen: easier said than done, and that's exactly the point
- Agreement: say yes and add something, don't reject ideas
- Team Work: have a group mind, think of others
- Don't Block: stealing jokes / not listening / changing topic
- Relationship: focus on connection between characters, not just subject of scene
- Initiation: who, what, when to set the scene
- Point of View, Opinion and Intention: have them, these help express and build your character
- Be in Character: maintain character throughout the scene
- Don't Ask Questions: too many questions can make your partner do all the work
- Make Active Choices: Do something. Don't be talking heads
VOCABULARY
THEATRE TERMS

A brief list of terms that relate to Improvisation Course work:

**Ad-lib**: When a performer improvises line on-stage. Derived from *ad libitum* (Latin).[1]

**Amphitheater**: an open-air theater, with seats rising in curved rows.[3]

**Apron**: The front area of the stage, nearest the audience; the portion of the stage in front of proscenium arch.[2]

**Ask For**: Question asked of the audience seeking information that is incorporated into any particular ‘handle’. *Example:* ‘Give me something that you do in your backyard’.

**Aside**: A line spoken by an actor/actress directly to the audience, unheard by the other performers on-stage.[2]

**Auditorium**: The portion of a theater which contains the audience seating.[2]

**Avante Garde**: Experimental or innovative works or people, derived from the French.[2]

**Balcony**: An elevated portion of seating in the back of the auditorium.[1]

**Curtain Call**: At the end of a live performance the cast will come out and do a bow while the audience applauds.[6]

**Doubling**: When an actor plays more than one character in a production. Most times this is done for economical reasons but it can be that because an actor would like to take on more than one role in the performance.

**Handle**: Another word for ‘improv game’, term used for an improv game played in front of an audience.

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The Difference Between Long-Form and Short-Form Improv

Back before Upright Citizens Brigade racked up $1 million in debt on a shiny new Lower East Side theater and improv training became de rigueur for any actor’s résumé, “Whose Line Is it Anyway?” was what many Americans thought of when they thought of improv comedy. The show aired on ABC from 1998 to 2007 and featured comedians performing quick theater games assigned by the host, Drew Carey. Last week the CW confirmed that it is reviving “Whose Line” with several of the original performers in tow and Aisha Tyler slated to host.

The move makes sense given that improv is the vogue in comedy. Training in it is almost a must for actors hoping to do commercial work, and as The New York Times recently pointed out, theaters such as UCB—which have proliferated wildly in markets major and small—often draw audiences that theater producers would kill for. But the short-form improv practiced on “Whose Line” is not the same beast as the long-form in fashion on stages and at schools.

“Long form is one suggestion and then you improvise for 25 minutes, and in short form you are constantly coming to the audience for suggestions throughout the evening and treating each improv game as its own little three- or four-minute piece,” said Joshua Funk, artistic director at the Second City Training Center in Hollywood. “Another way to think of it is that long form is to jazz as short form is to pop.”

Second City produces touring shows that travel across the country and on cruise ships—shows that use a mix of sketch comedy, short-form improv, and long-form improv. Though short form can sometimes become “kind of gimmicky,” according to Funk, it also has a broader appeal than long form. “It becomes a little easy, but that also is what makes it bulletproof and much more palatable for television and much safer for television networks to produce.”

Joel Jones, a comic who has performed and trained at the Magnet Theater in New York and is co-director of Big Blue Door, an improv and writing training center in Charlottesville, Va., traces the roots of short-form improv to work done by Chicago theater stalwarts Viola Spolin and Neva Boyd in the 1920s. He attributes the beginning of long-form improv to another late Chicago stage icon, Del Close. “It was kind of mechanical, I think, at first,” Jones said. “I think it goes after Wagner’s ‘Ring’ Cycle.”

Long form is the technique that helped launch the careers of Will Ferrell, Tina Fey, Steve Carrell, and other screen stars. But it is rarely seen outside the black-box theaters that comprise the front lines of the comedy scenes in New York, Los Angeles, and other cities. Training in the form can provide valuable skills, but an actor isn’t likely to find herself practicing it on national TV any time soon.

“It’s not like there are a lot of short-form TV shows, but ‘Whose Line Is It Anyway?’ at least is a short-form TV show,” Jones said. “Even though long form is much more hip and helps you become a much better actor, it doesn’t film very well.”

*Backstage, By Daniel Holloway
Videos

Improvisation in Film

TED Talk: The Way of Improvisation
This chapter is formatted to wet your appetite or in other words, warm you up!

1. Tap Out
2. My Day
3. Fruit Salad
5. Point and Cross
6. Twizzle
7. Fairytale Relay
8. Three Framed Fairytale
Tap Out

Serves: 10—15 Players  Cook Time: 10 min

Instructions

- One player makes an ‘ask’ for an object, item, or scenario
- At any time players may call ‘freeze’ and enter the scene
- Every time a player enters the scene, the scene must change completely, but be connected to whatever action or position was taking place in the previous scene.
- Only two players may be active at any time.

Notes

In ‘Tap Out’ all players arrange themselves in a ring or line, with one player to begin the game. This player makes an ‘ask for’: object, item, situation, etc. and begins the scene. At any time one player may call ‘freeze’ and enter the scene. Once a player has entered the scene they must change it completely, but have some connection to the position or actions taking place in the previous scene. The game works the best when done quickly, typically no more than 15-30 seconds should lapse before someone changes the scene. Linking the scenes to current events or humorous stories in the news also greatly increases the effectiveness of the game.

Ingredients

10—15 Players
An Audience ‘Ask For’

Example object ‘Ask For’:
- Trash can
- Fire Truck
- Cell Phone
- Toilet

Entrées
My Day

Serves: 2 Players  
Cook Time: 20 min

Instructions

• Players are paired up
• Each player takes a turn telling the other player they’re activities for the entire day up until the moment they came to class
• While telling the partner of the activities they use physical movements to simulate that activity
• Players must continue talking without stopping or saying ‘um, um’
• After each player does this then partner A repeats the same story but at one point the Instructor will yell ‘Freeze’. The Instructor will then offer a prompt, example: ‘Suddenly, Big Foot shows up with a bundle of flowers.’
• Once the prompt is heard the player must incorporate that prompt into their original story.

Notes

Players must maintain eye contact, cannot break eye contact.
Fruit Salad

Serves: 2 Players    Cook Time: 20 min

Instructions

- Players sit in a chair which are arranged in a circle facing inwards. One Player is in the middle and does not have a chair.

- The person in the middle needs to say something that applies to at least 2 people in the circle, example: ‘anyone wearing blue’

- All those ‘wearing blue’ get out of chair and try to find an empty chair to sit in, including the person in the middle.

- The person in the middle tries to sit down. There'll be one person left without a chair- this person will be the next person in the middle of the circle. The standing person starts a new round by saying a different statement.

- Players cannot move to the seat immediately to their left or right.

- Players avoid being left in the middle of the circle.

Notes

The person in the middle needs to say something that applies to at least 2 people in the circle. For example, “Anyone who has a dog”, “Anyone who likes sushi”. If the person’s statement applies to someone sitting in the circle, that person has to move from his or her seat and sit in a different chair. If the person says "Fruit Salad", then everyone needs to move to a different chair.
Point and Cross

Serves: 15 Players  Cook Time: 20 min

Instructions

• Players stand in a circle facing inward.
• One play begins by pointing to some across the circle.
• The player being pointed to then nods in recognition of the ‘pointer’.
• Once the ‘pointer’ gets a nod they begin crossing the circle to the spot where the player who nodded is standing.
• The player who nodded must then point to someone else in the circle, receive a nod and then cross to their position before the first pointer reaches their spot.
• This continues until the focus is broken.

Notes

This game is intended to help players focus and constantly be in a position of readiness. At no time are players supposed to be on their toes or walking as they point. Players should stand in Neutral with a sense of ease.
Twizzle

Serves: 15 Players  
Cook Time: 20 min

Instructions

- Players stand in a circle facing clockwise
- Cues are words that the players must execute throughout game.
- Cues: Go: Walk
- Cue: Turn: pivot and face opposite direction
- Cue: Jump: Jump and land facing in opposite direction
- Cue: Twizzle: Jump while spinning 360 degrees in air and land in the same direction as started.
- At anytime the Instructor will call out these ‘Cues’ and the players must comply or be asked to sit in the middle of the circle or Mush Pot.
- This is an elimination game.

Notes

Players must freeze in the position they landed after executing the ‘cue’. No scratching, adjusting clothing or talking. If any of this occurs then that player goes to the middle of circle and sits in the mush pot.
Fairytale Relay

Serves: 15 Players  Cook Time: 20 min

Ingredients
10 - 20 Players

Instructions

- Players are broken into groups of 3 to 5
- Instructor stands/sits in middle of room evenly distant from each group that is stationed in the corners of the room/space.
- Instructor is holding cards with well known or reviewed fairytales.
- One player from each group runs up and looks at the card and begins ‘acting out’ the fairytale until their group guesses.
- Once a group guesses the fairytale the player runs back to the Instructor and grabs the card, returns to their group and a new player begins the whole process again.

Notes

Players cannot communicate in any other way other than physical, no mouthing words. Players must return to their group before acting out the fairytale, no stopping half way to group in order to eliminate distance to retrieve card from Instructor.
Three Framed Fairytale

Serves: 15 Players  Cook Time: 20 min

Ingredients
10 - 20 Players

Instructions
- Players are broken into groups of 3 to 5
- Instructor gives a card to each group with a fairytale on it.
- Groups work to create tableaus or frozen ‘pictures’ of three moments in the story.
- The three tableaus are of all members in the group and must display the beginning, middle and end of the fairytale.
- Once a group shows the three tableaus the audience guesses which story they where telling.

Notes
Players cannot communicate or move in the tableaus, they must do their best to illustrate the moment in the story in only a picture.
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<td>1:</td>
<td>ABC’s</td>
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<td>2:</td>
<td>Changing Realities</td>
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<td>3:</td>
<td>Countdown</td>
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<td>4:</td>
<td>Dub Movie</td>
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<td>5:</td>
<td>Lines from a Play</td>
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<td>6:</td>
<td>Action Movie</td>
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<td>7:</td>
<td>Sentence Smash</td>
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<td>For Whom the Bell Tolls</td>
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<td>Remote Control</td>
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<td>16:</td>
<td>Poet’s Corner</td>
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ABC’s

Serves: 8  
Cook Time: 5 min

Instructions

- Players partner assigning ‘a’ or ‘b’
- Player ‘A’ must begin the scene with a sentence starting with the letter ‘A’
- Player ‘B’ then must respond with the next sentence starting with the letter ‘B’.
- Players alternate letters of the alphabet until they reach ‘Z’.

Notes

To play this game players must create a rapid fire scene based on changing dialogue. Players must be in sentences with letters of the alphabet and alternate between each other with the next letter. Scene or relationships between the players are to be determined at random by the audience, or an ‘Ask For’.

Ingredients

8—10 Players

Audience ‘Ask For’ suggestions:

‘Give us a suggestion for a heart-to-heart discussion between family members’
Changing Realities

Serves: 4  
Cook Time: 5—10 min

Ingredients
8—10 Players

Example of ‘Ask For’:
‘Give me an object’

Instructions

- 4 Players line up
- 1 Plyers begins with an ‘Ask For’
- Each player subsequently stops the scene and chest it with their own introduction
- The 4th player to enter the scene must find a reason to leave the scene
- After each player leaves the scene it reverts back to the previous moment
- Players may not use dancing as a means of excusing themselves from the scene or beginning one.

Notes

This game begins with a group of 3 to 5 players; though 4 players is ideal. The first player begins the game by making an ‘Ask For’ be it an item, a situation or a profession. At any point the remaining players can call out ‘freeze’, the scene then stops and that player changes the scene to whatever the player(s) appears to look like they are doing. When the final player enters the scene it is their job to change the location, position, or action of all other players and then find a justifiable reason to leave the scene. After a player leaves the scene all remaining players revert to previous scene but must now justify their new positions or movements. This is repeated until the original player is the only one left on stage.
Count Down

Serves: 4  
Cook Time: 5—10 min

Instructions

- 2 Players are given a family business and a profession and a sinister or bizarre secret timed to the job.
- 2 Players are given a relationship between each other or alternative profession, and a strange quirk about them.
- The first 2 players are given 1 minute to construct a scene based on their context.
- After 1 minute the remaining 2 players enter the scene and must interact with the previous 2 players’ scene for one additional minute.
- At the end of the two minutes the entire scene is done again, but each group of player’ time is cut to 30 seconds each, (1 min. total)
- This is then repeated again to 15 seconds each (30 min. total)
- Continue to only 5 sections per group (10 sec. total)
- Finally the entire scene is performed one more time in the span of 1 second.

Notes

This game begins with 4 players, paired up into two groups. The information for scene is acquired through an ‘ask for’. The game starts with 1 minute of the first pair creating a scene based on their environment. After 1 minute the second pair enters and must interact with their ‘strange event’, while exhibiting their strange quirk, this too is given 1 minute. After 2m minutes the players must perform the entire scene again, recreating as much of the same dialogue and physical interactions that too place in the previous scene, in half the time. This is done again in the half then time, then in a total of 10 seconds, and finally all in 1 second.
Dub-Movie

Serves: 4  
Cook Time: 5—10 min

Ingredients

4 Players  
2 chairs  
Suggested ‘Ask For’:

“Give us something that would happen in an action movie”.

Instructions

- Two players take a seat with their backs to the stage
- The two seated players act as the voice of the other players in the center of the stage (they cannot see the standing actors)
- The two players who are not seated must act out everything that is said by the other players and cannot speak

Notes

This game begins with each of the two players being assigned as the voice over of the other two players (they cannot see on stage). These two must remain seated in with their backs to the ‘movie’ or other players on stage and cannot see who either player is doing. The objective of these two players are to provide all the dialogue and actions of the other two players they cannot see. On the flip side the players acting out the ‘movie’ are not allowed to speak and must act out all of the ‘dubbers’ actions/story.
Lines from a Play

Serves: 2 – 3  
Cook Time: 5—10 min

Ingredients

Players

2 – 3 Scripts

Suggested ‘Ask For’:

“Give us something you do on vacation.”

Instructions

- Scripts are selected at random from a stack of plays
- Plays are opened to a random page determined by the audience.
- The starting line of each page is determined by the audience.
- This is repeated for however many players will be reading lines from the scripts.
- Players reading from scripts may only read lines from that play.
- Players can read any lines in the script.
- At least one player must not have a script.

Notes

This game starts with two of three players and all but one of them receiving a random script from a wide selection of plays. Each script has its starting page and starting line decided by the audience who will shout out ‘stop!’ as the player randomly flips through the script. Players reading from the script may only read lines from the play but can read any lines in any order and are not restricted to lines from any other character. The remaining player(s) must react to the dialogue of the other players and create a scene based on the context given by the audience.
**Action Movie**

Serves: 3  
Cook Time: 5—10 min

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**Ingredients**

Players

Audience ‘ask for’

Suggested ‘Ask For’:

“Give us a situation found in an action film”

Example:

Disarming a bomb

High speed car chase

Hijacking a plane

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**Instructions**

- 2 Players are given 2 separate words or phrases. They can only speak using those phrases.
- 3rd Player is the leader of the team, he/she is free to speak. They guide the two other players through the scene.

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**Notes**

During this game the audience is asked to provide 4 words or phrases which are divided among two of the players. These players can only speak using the phrases prescribed to them. The audience is then asked for the scene from an action movie or a situation in which something exciting is happening. The player with out any restrictions is then left to drive the scene and react to whatever is being said. This game typically works best when players vary their tone and inflection with their phrases, and find ways for their phrases to interact with each other as well as the player with no restrictions.
Sentence Smash

Serves: 2  
Cook Time: 5—10 min

Ingredients

Large selection of random sentences on slips of paper

Suggested ‘Ask For’:

- Give us something you do in the backyard
- Family run business.
- Something that would happen in a science fiction film

Instructions

- Each player takes a handful of slips of paper with random sentences on written on them.
- Throughout the scene the players must pull out the slips of paper and incorporate the sentence within the scene.

Notes

In this game players are given a large assortment of random sentences provided by the audience. The audience then gives them context for a scene such as an everyday situation, a profession or an unusual scenario. Players must improvise from the information provided and periodically pull out the slips of paper and incorporate the sentence into the scene. This is done to the greatest effect when the players either pull out their slips while the other player is speaking, or playing off the fact that they are reading something. Things such as ‘look at this sweet love note my honey left this morning’ or ‘look at what my eviction notice says’ works well.
When the Bell Tolls

Serves: 3  
Cook Time: 5 min

Ingredients

Bell, Buzzer, or noise maker

Suggested ‘Ask For’:
Give us a skilled trade

Instructions

- 2 Players are given a situation, profession, or relationship
- At any point the remaining player may ring the bell or buzzer
- When the bell or buzzer is sounded, whoever spoke or acted last must immediately change their action to something else
- The bell or buzzer must be rung at least twice in a fairly quick succession

Notes

Players must think quickly and be prepared to say or do almost anything. Two players will be given a profession or relationship between each other and begin a scene. At any time another player may ring the bell. When this occurs the last player to say or do something must immediately say or do the opposite, or change what they said or did completely. The bell ringer must buzz or ring at least twice but may do so a long as it is appropriate and entertaining for the audience.
Expert Panel

Serves: 4 – 6          Cook Time: 5—7 min

Ingredients

Chairs for Players to sit

Suggested ‘Ask For’:
Give us 3 unusual careers or jobs

Instructions

- Each of the players are given a bizarre area of expertise from the audience.
- Players are given a topic affecting the world and must discuss it.
- Players must find a way to incorporate or connect the subject to their area of expertise.

Notes

4 to 6 players begin with an ‘ask for’ : a bizarre area of expertise to each of the players to be ‘experts’. The audience is then asked for a problem facing the world for the ‘experts’ to address. The players must then discuss how to solve the problem or how the problem is directly connected to their area of expertise.
So, I’m Dumping You

Serves: 4 – 5
Cook Time: 5 – 7 min

Instructions

- 1 Player is the ‘dumpee’
- 1 Player is the ‘dumper’
- Remaining players are various employees or a restaurant where the ‘dumping’ or break-up occurs.
- Dumpee leaves the room while the remaining players ask audience for: 3 reasons why the dumpee is being dumped; Where the dumper is moving; and a new profession for the dumper.
- Dumpee comes back into the room and must begin scene without knowing the above ‘ask fors’.
- Dumpee must guess why they are being dumped, where the dumper is going and what their new job will be.
- Remaining players may help give cues; preferably through action.

Notes

‘Dumpee’ player leaves room. Meanwhile one of the other players is designated as the ‘dumper’ who asks the audience for the necessary info for scene (see above). When the ‘dumpee’ returns they are greeted by one of the remaining players who will play the role of the restaurant’s server/waiter. The dumpee and the dumper begin with small talk until the dumper says ‘so, I’m dumping you…..’ At this point the dumper and the remaining players must give only clues to the dumpee who then must guess why they are being dumped, where dumper is moving and what their new job will be.

Ingredients

2 chairs
So, were firing you....

Serves: 4 – 5  
Cook Time: 5 – 7 min

Ingredients
2 chairs

Instructions

- 2 players are the ‘boss’s’
- 1 player is being fired
- Remaining players are various employees where the firing occurs.
- Employee to be fired leaves the room while the remaining players ask audience for: 3 reasons why they are being fired and what the business they actually are being fired from.
- Remaining players may help give cues; preferably through action.

Notes

1 Player who is being fired from a company leaves the room while the ‘ask for’ are established (see above). The player returns to the room greeted by one of the remaining players who is their fellow ‘co-worker’. The player and the two bosses begin a dialogue until they say ‘so, we’re firing you....’. At this point the bosses and the remaining players must give clues to the player being fired who then guesses all the ‘ask for’ information.
Survivor

Serves: 4 – 5  
Cook Time: 5 – 7 min

**Instructions**

- Players ask the audience for a situation that might occur on a deserted island.
- Players then act out the scene for approximately 2 minutes.
- At the end of 2 minutes one player is ‘voted off the island’ by the audience.
- The remaining players then act out the scene again.
- This continues until only one player remains.

**Notes**

Players ask the audience for a scenario that could happen on a deserted island. Next the players must act out the scene, approx. 2 minutes. At the end of 2 minutes the audience then ‘votes off’ one of the players. The remaining players must then act out the scene in its entirety, including moments when the voted off player was involved. This continues until only one player remains who will then act out the entire scene by themselves.

**Ingredients**

Suggested ‘Ask For’:

“Give us something you would do on a deserted island”
Interpreter

Serves: 2  
Cook Time: 5—7 min

Ingredients
Podium or Music Stand

Instructions

- 1 Player is a fictional foreign dignitary
- 1 Player is the other player’s ‘interpreter’
- The dignitary asks the audience for the name of a fictional country
- The interpreter asks for a crisis affecting the world
- The dignitary speaks in gibberish about the topic
- The interpreter ‘translates’ whatever the dignitary is saying

Notes

One player is designated the leader of a fictional country with its own language (gibberish). The audience is asked to provide the name of the fictional country and a problem facing that country. The dignitary then begins to speak about the problem facing their country. The interpreter then translates what they dignitary is saying for the audience.
Purpose of the study

This study aims to contribute to the need for sound theory development and empirical research in the field of improvisation training by providing empirical evidence to support the use of improvisational theatre techniques for enhancing climate for work group innovation. It also aims to contribute to the development of the existing theory in making explicit the link between the principles of improvisational theatre and the factors of climate for work group innovation.

Current theoretical perspectives

Improvisational theatre is a form of theatre that does not use a script or predetermined ideas for dialogue, direction or movement (Nevraumont, Hanson & Smeaton, 2002). The performance is executed spontaneously and without any preconceptions in response to the immediate stimuli of the environment (Frost & Yarrow, 1990). These stimuli include suggestions from the audience about the characters, location, situation and style of the scene and include offers made by fellow actors on stage (Nevraumont et al., 2002). In order to create successful performances, improvisational actors must therefore work together as a cooperative team (Frost & Yarrow, 1990). Although improvisational theatre performances are unpredictable, this does not imply that they are without substantial structure or principles. These principles are trust and support, acceptance, listening and awareness and narrative skills. It is suggested here that these principles relate to the factors supportive of an innovative work group climate.

Improvisational training in organizations

Background: Recent research results have shown that creativity and originality are neglected in the formal educational system (Beard & Wilson, 2002). It has, however, been suggested that individuals can relearn to be creative and spontaneous (De Bono, 1982; 1990; Vera & Crossan 2005). Improvisational theatre has shown that the potential to be creative and spontaneous can be rediscovered and developed through exercises. According to Izzo (1997) and Lowe (2000), creativity and spontaneity are improvisational skills and can be learned by anyone, as long as learners understand and apply themselves to the principles. Learning can take place during experiential training that incorporates theatre games and exercises (Frost & Yarrow, 1990; Izzo, 1997; Spolin, 1963).

Process of improvisational training: Improvisational training involves the playing of theatre games designed to develop process skills (e.g. listening and communication), context-specific knowledge (a perspective and a context that enable team members to leave their comfort zone) as well as techniques that promote acceptance and shared responsibility (Crossan, 1998). Therefore improvisational theatre exercises provide a context wherein individuals can learn experientially the principles necessary for innovation. Teams develop through playing, seeing that bonds of communication are created between the playing members as well as through experiencing shared attitudes and behavioural patterns (Pirola-Marlo et al., 2002). Can it therefore be argued that a work group which is exposed to an improvisational theatre training programme would not only learn skills that would help the individual to be more innovative, but would also create shared attitudes and behaviours that could benefit the group as a whole? This question deserves note, as this study is concerned with whether or not climate for work group innovation, (as a shared attitude toward the work environment) would be influenced by improvisational interventions. Improvisation is a skill that can be learnt by applying oneself to the principles of improvisational theatre when playing theatre games (Frost & Yarrow, 1990; Izzo, 1997; Spolin, 1963). Furthermore, the skill of improvisation promotes a group’s capacity to innovate (Vera & Crossan, 2005).