



TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE—LINKED TO IRP'S

## ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

### **Instant Improv**

Vancouver TheatreSports® League (VTSL) began in 1980 and is now a local institution and a worldwide phenomenon, producing and staging some of the most daring and innovative improv in the world.

The audience provides the inspiration in the form of suggestions, and the improvisers provide the

entertainment in the form of hilarious improvised scenes. Instant Improv allows the audience to see their ideas instantly transformed into reality. Whether reconstructing the story of an audience member's first day at school or a recess mishap, each Instant Improv performance is as unique as its audience. **For audiences grades K-12**



VTSL INCORPORATES SOME OF THE FOLLOWING GAMES IN *INSTANT IMPROV*:

**Interviewing the Expert** The audience provides the name of a sport and a vegetable. In a talk show setting, one actor is the interviewer and the other is an expert on, for example, tennis played with carrots; or how to use potatoes in rock climbing.

**Emotional Roller Coaster** The actors choose who the characters are and what they are doing. The audience supplies three emotions such as suspicion, fear, and joy. The facilitator calls out the first emotion and the scene starts in this mood. When the next emotion is called out the actors must find a good reason to shift into the new mood.

**Open Scene** The audience provides two actors with a problem. The actors choose the location and an activity, then start improvising. The third person enters the scene to complicate or resolve the situation.

**Scene Beyond Words** The audience supplies a location. The actors choose who they are and what the problem is, then improvise, playing their emotions in full, but without using words.



**Complaints Department** The audience provides the name or type of a store. One actor is the supervisor in the Complaints Department. All the others choose their characters and their problems and come to speak to the person in charge.

**Fairytales** The audience provides the title of a well-known fairy tale and the actors enact it as an improvisation. Each actor can play several roles, and for optional chaotic good times, once the scene is complete, they may repeat it in a two-minute version, then one-minute, then thirty seconds, and finally, ten seconds .

### THEMES:

- COMEDY
- CREATIVITY
- EMPOWERMENT
- IMAGINATION
- IMPROVISATION
- INTERACTION
- LISTENING SKILLS
- NARRATIVE
- SPONTANEITY
- STORY TELLING
- TEAMWORK



## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

**CREATE YOUR OWN STORY** (All grades K–12) This game is very simple and can be played with students as young as kindergarten, older students, or even adults. Create a title for the story. One actor starts with one word, the next actor adds another word or phrase, such as:

*Once upon a time there was a \_\_\_\_\_, and everyday he/she \_\_\_\_\_, until one day \_\_\_\_\_ and because of that \_\_\_\_\_ and because of that \_\_\_\_\_ and because of that \_\_\_\_\_, etc.*

... and so on as the story is built round the circle making grammatical sense while producing a story that is logical on its own terms. Don't judge — just listen and go with the flow. Pairs and small groups can practice this exercise until they think almost as one, and the stories become vivid and fun.

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### EARLY PRIMARY (K-2) PRE & POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

**“YES LET’S !”** (20-30 min) (IRP Link: Drama Skills: *taking on roles to explore and imagine, willingness to participate, using voice, movement, and their bodies to explore ideas and feelings*)

This activity involves the entire class as one group. Teacher leads first to demonstrate. He or She simply makes a suggestion beginning with “Let’s...” such as, “Let’s fly like airplanes!” or “Let’s eat hamburgers”. The students must reply as a group with “Yes, Let’s !”. And then proceeds to do the suggestion. Each time a suggestion is made everyone repeats “Yes Let’s” and then they do it. The suggestions continue until everyone has had a chance to be the leader. It is wise to give each leader time for at least 3 or 4 suggestions. The crazier the better! The only rule is to say “YES”.

**“PRETEND THAT...”** (20-30 min) (IRP Link – same as above )

Divide the class into groups of 4-or 5 students. Have each group decide on which fairytale they want to use as a loose structure. Then explain that they are allowed to add other ideas to this fairytale, for example (Hansel and Gretel) one student may say, “ Pretend that we turn the oven into a white unicorn that can fly and save us “...etc... In this case people need to say “yes” and add more if they like.

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### BASIC IMPROVS (GRADES 4–12)

**Solo Activity** (1 actor) — Choose a common daily activity like making a sandwich or washing the dishes. Use props if available. While performing this activity tell a story describing an event or incident from your past.

**Job Interview** (2 actors) — Two actors are required. One in the interviewer, the other is the applicant. Only at the start of the scene should the actors be informed as to what the job is that the applicant in being interviewed for. The more creative the job, the better. For example, Time Machine Operator, Food Taster for the Queen, etc.

**Beginnings** (2 or 3 actors) — One or two of the actors perform wild, arbitrary movements and, on a signal such as a whistle, the actors freeze while the remaining actor(s) must explain what it is they are doing by observing the body positions.

**Orchestrated Stories** (Groups of 4–6) One actor is chosen as the conductor of the orchestra. As the conductor points to different players, that player tells part of the story for as long as the conductor wishes to let them continue. It could be for a full minute, or it could be just a few seconds.

