

Soaring to New Heights with Improv:

Enhancing Communication with

“Winging It” Play



Charles Warren

Fort Smith, AR

cwarren@fortsmithschools.org

PERSONAL GROWTH UTILIZING “IMPROV”

- Communication
- Team-building
- Emotional intelligence (EI)
- Body language
- Listening
- Creativity

FUNDAMENTALS OF IMPROV

- Build from the “prompt”
- Establish the relationship and location
- Accept the premise
- Support your scene partner
- Truly inhabit your character

IT ALL STARTS WITH “YES, AND...”

We are in the business of saying “NO!”

Improv is just the opposite

- Don't say “No.”; don't say “but...”
- Instead, we accept what is offered
- Contribute another element to move the story along

Exercise break – “**Yes, and...**”



DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE CREATIVE

Embrace the idea of creative accountants, not creative accounting

We are already doing the work

Exercise break – *The Magic Box*



LISTENING IS A SKILL

Stop prepping your response and LISTEN

Listening is a tool to help persuade, influence, and build rapport

Exercise break – *Remember the Occasion*

READING BODY LANGUAGE

The importance of non-verbal clues

Communicates acceptance or rejection

Exercise break – *Presents*

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

Managing your emotions

Understanding the emotions of people around you

- Self-awareness & Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy & Social Skills

Exercise break – ***Excuses***

TEAM-BUILDING

Just like body building, it takes a lot of exercise

Don't leave your scene partner out to dry

Exercise break – ***Alphabet Game***



COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Our position requires communication skills

We need to grow these skills to communicate **INSIGHTFULLY**

- Creativity
- Listening
- EI Awareness

Exercise break – ***Party Quirks***

OTHER ICE-BREAKER IMPROV GAMES

Names with a Twist

- State your name with an alliterative adjective and a small gesture
- Then, repeat the name and gesture before you say the next person's name and gesture

Club Gesture

- Tell a fun fact about yourself and a gesture that goes with it

Two Truths and a Lie

- Tell two true personal facts and one lie and let others guess which is the lie



IMPROV GAMES

From slide 4 - Yes, and...

One player makes a statement (can be with a prompt), another player responds with “yes, and...” and extrapolates.

- Wow, what a beautiful day on the beach!
- This sandwich is delicious.

From slide 5 - The Magic Box

Prepare a box of strange and varied objects. Give an object to a player. They must share something about themselves that relates to the object. Ask them to connect the object to the conference theme.



IMPROV GAMES

From slide 6 - Remember the Occasion

Begin by introducing a fictitious memory. Go around the group and ask each person to add a detail to the memory, forming a story.

- Remember when we volunteered to run a water station on the marathon route...

- Remember when that one ASBO presenter accidentally used his vacation pictures in his PowerPoint presentation...



IMPROV GAMES

From slide 7 - Presents

Form a circle of people. Using gestures, silently give a present to the next player. The player, watching your action, says “Thank you” and explains what the present is. The player then provides a different gift to the next player, using their own gestures.

- Heavy – like a bowling ball or Acme anvil
- Pulled from your pocket – like a comb or matchbook

IMPROV GAMES

From slide 8 - Excuses The game starts with a simple accusation. The first player makes up an excuse on the spot. Other players can corroborate and embellish upon the story.

- Why didn't you meet your girl scout cookie sales quota?

From slide 9 - Alphabet Game The game requires that each consecutive line spoken starts with the next letter of the alphabet. Start a scene with a prompt and a letter.

- Pirates on the beach:

Ahoy, what ye be looking for? Buried treasure!

Captain, I think I found it.

Don't think that's it.



IMPROV GAMES

From slide 10 - Party Quirks

Three players are given a strange quirk to act out. The party host doesn't know the various quirks. The party host lets three guests enter the party and must guess the quirk of each guest by watching the guests act out his/her quirk.

- A dog who can speak human, but only insults.
- Someone writing a fanfiction story about this party.

BONUS IMPROV GAMES

(Creativity)

The Problem Solver

One player comes up with a problem and the other player must solve the problem using any object that they see nearby.

- The beavers in the zoo have escaped!
- The kid with a peanut allergy just dropped a jar of Jiff!
- The hors d'oeuvres are frozen and guest are here!

(Listening)

Three-Headed Expert

Three players act as one. Audience members ask them a question (maybe based upon a specific prompt). The three-headed expert replies one word (from each head) at a time.

- School Finance – What's the value of academic ROI?
- Procurement – When is the best time to buy textbooks?
- Travel – Should I pay for travel insurance on employee flights?