

Lesson 4

Comic Tools

Grades: Advanced (11-12)

Educational Objective: The student will demonstrate the ability to

Materials Needed: None

Hook: Ask someone to make up a title for a new sitcom. Ask what the title promises. Do several titles.

Step 1: TOOL #1 Clash of context. This is the fish out of water. Taking something from its usual place and sticking it where it doesn't belong. Have them each write down five clashes of context. Put them into groups of 4-5 and have them pick the best one. Have them create a one-minute second scene to demonstrate. Have each group perform.

Step 2: TOOL #2 Wildly Inappropriate Response. This is the same as Clash of context only it is in Attitude and emotion. Example, a funeral is quiet and respectful so look for loud and disrespectful. BBQ and militant vegetarianism. At a baseball game cheering for the vendors, On Death row having a giggle fit. Have each group come up with five. Have them create a one-minute second scene to demonstrate. Have each group perform.

Step 3: TOOL #3 The Law of Comic Opposites. To use this tool, first create a comic character and identify her or his Strong Comic Perspective. Then seek the diametric opposite of that perspective and assign that opposite to a second character. Now lock them in a room together. Example: A scrooge marries a spendthrift. A priest inherits a brothel. College nerd and party animal are roommates. Have each group come up with five. Have them create a one-minute second scene to demonstrate. Have each group perform.

Step 4: TOOL #4 Telling the Truth or Lie for comic effect. State the obvious for comic effect. For example, talking about a two year old – “Man, he has the attention span of a two year old.” Or lie, find the exact truth and tell the opposite. Situation: At the dentist about to numb mouth. Patient: Novocain? No thanks. In their groups have of them write down the same number of situations as they have people in their group. Example: In shark infested waters, on an answering machine, at confession, at a deaf school. Then have them pass paper to the person next to them and have them create a response either using truth or a lie. Have them choose the best one.

Step 5: Review all the tools and have them create a skit using all of them.

Step 6: Have each group perform. Discuss after each performance.