

More Scenic Improvisation

Educational Objective: The students will demonstrate their ability to challenge their own ideas and accept the group dynamic by participating in several group exercises.

Materials Needed: None

Hook: Play “George.” Players stand in a circle, noting the spot on the floor where they stand. Choose one player, who will start off the clapping. During the game, this player will be called George instead of his real name. George will count off the three-four clap, “one-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three” then the group will start up the rhythm by: Clap left hand up and right hand down clapping your neighbors and then clap hands out to your neighbors, then clap yourself. Once the group is in rhythm, George will initiate the Name Game by saying his own name, “George,” on the down clap or the up/down position. He will then say another person’s name on the out clap. Normal clap is a rest. That passes it to the person he named. A person messes up if:

They don’t say their own name on the very next down clap

They don’t say someone else’s name on the very next out clap

They try to use George’s real name.

They screw up clapping.

Within the circle, George is in the “last place” position. The person to George’s left is in the number one position. Whoever screws up takes George’s place and becomes George and the others under the one who messed up moves around the circle, trying to get to that number one spot.

Step 1: Play “What Are You Doing? Teams.” Split into two teams of 4. One person on team 1 starts by pantomiming an action (for example, digging ditches). The other three players on team 1 join in, doing the same action. Then a player from team 2 approaches and asks what they are doing. One of the players (it doesn’t matter which one – but it is not assigned) from team 1 answers something that they were not doing (for example, playing baseball). All the players from team two then start pantomiming playing baseball together. Then someone on team 1 asks what they are doing and someone from team two answers something they are not doing. Team 1 must pantomime the answer and it keeps going. The object is to work together in the pantomimes. Quickly get into position and act out the pantomimes as a team.

Step 2: Play “Let’s Go To The Blank.” Have six players spread out on the stage. One player yells out “Let’s go to the _____!” Filling in the blank with any location. Then all the players shout “Yay!” as they are very excited to go there. At this point everyone portrays part of the environment. For example, if we go to the bank, someone becomes a teller, a guard, customers, an ATM, the line ropes, etc. Once the picture is set, the players begin interacting as they normally would in this location (start the scene). Everything is happening at once but now the players must narrow the focus of the scene to showcase one particular interaction. How do you decide which interaction is to be the focus? The one which is most important or which one has the highest stakes. The man changing his address on his checks is not as important as the man reporting his credit card stolen. Once the highest stakes scene is determined then the whole group must adjust their scene to support the main scene. If you can’t support, like say, someone playing the ATM, just keep quiet. Never say something just because you haven’t said something for a long time. When the highest stakes scene is played out someone edits it by saying, “Let’s go to the _____!” and we start again. Do about 4 or 5 locations before we do six other players.