

Stanislavski Focus Connections

Educational Objective: The students will demonstrate their ability to focus on the connections made in improvisation by performing several connections and focus exercises.

Materials Needed: Slips of paper, container, words that most won't know the definitions.

Hook: Ask the players to stand anywhere in the room (no sitting). Have them pick out a spot somewhere in the room. It could be a dot on the wall, something on the ceiling, floor anywhere that does not move. No talking. Tell them to focus, concentrate on that spot. Nothing else matters. Call this focus spot #1. Now ask them to find another spot somewhere else in the room. Have them focus. Call this focus spot # 2. Now have them find another spot somewhere else in the room. Have them focus. Call this focus spot # 3. Switch back and forth between the focus spots by calling out 1, 2, or 3. Use varying speeds and times of focus. This whole thing should take about 5-7 minutes. Everyone should be focused and concentrating.

Step 1: Now explain that Stanislavski believed that there are four points of focus for an actor. The first is an internal focus. Focus on yourself. Pick a spot on your hand and focus on it. Realize your relationship to your surroundings, feel the presence of others and the area you are in while focused on your hand. Focus for a bout 30 seconds. Call this the Internal Focus. Now have them pick a partner, anyone. Just look at each other. Don't laugh or look away. This is a focus on your partner. Silently ask questions – what does this person think about me? How does this person treat me? What has this person gone through that affects me? Focus for 30 seconds. Next have them focus on the entire group looking at everyone. Have them silently ask a question quickly about each person. Focus for 30 seconds. The fourth point of focus is the Invisible Specter. Have them look off at someone who is not really there. Someone they know, but not someone who brings up a lot of negative emotions. Have them see the person. What are they wearing? Doing? What do they think about you? Focus for 30 seconds. Now, as before, switch between the focuses. Vary the speed of switches. Then throw the spot focuses back in the mix. Speed up the switches. This should take 7-10 minutes.

Step 2: Have everyone grab a partner. They must look at each other in the eyes. They must take turns saying "Yes" to each other as in a conversation. The only thing they can say is "Yes" but they must give different meaning each time. They must really communicate with their partner. **Who cares about the audience; convince your partner!** Let them go for about 2 minutes. Now have them do the same thing but they can only say "No." Let them go about 90 Seconds. Now have one say "Yes" and the other say "NO." 60 seconds. Switch who's saying "Yes" and "No."

Step 3: Play "Liars Club." Have five players come up and sit facing the audience. Put five slips (attached) in a container. One will have the definition of a difficult word the other 4 will say "you are a liar." They all draw one. They then go down the line and give a definition of the word. 4 make them up and 1 gives the real definition. The audience guesses. All first five to guess the right one are up next.