

FUZZY IMPROV

Mindset

Lesson 101-02

Attention & Memory



CW4SP.com

Cls 2 Spring

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CLASS RULES:

To Do:

NAME TAGS

CHECK IN WITH TEAMMATES

HELP CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

BE KIND: NO ISM, NO POLITICS. Do not be offensive or insulting to your teammates.

BOUNDARIES - PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL. Be gentle and appropriate.

NEW CHOICE AND TIME OUT. Use these to steer the scene away from (or stop) anything you find upsetting or out of bounds.

The Improv world abounds with venues for R rated material. But this class will always be G rated and family friendly.

Class Structure: The first 45 minutes of the class we be doing exercises and games that focus on the concepts presented in this handout. The last 30 minutes we will be creating scenes using the concepts we learned.

Note: [G X] at the beginning of an item indicates the page of [Improv As Improv Does Best Curriculum](#), Introduction to Improvisation, *Patrick Gantz 2020* at which the topic can be found.

[HD] at the beginning of the topic indicates materials that I have added.

HAVE FUN!

Harold Dreibelbis

2.0 Objective for this session:

2.0 Objective for this session: [G 15]

Be Attentive. We are creating collaboratively. Ensure you hear each other's contributions. Focus outward to hear. Project out to be heard.

Remember what you hear: You are building on your TMs contributions. Remember those contributions.

2.1 Concentration:

A lot can get lost on a crowded improv stage. Ensure you HEAR and ARE HEARD – listen and project.

Related Exercise:

RED BALL, RED BULL, BREAD BOWL – a word/energy passing game.

Lessons:

- **Listen** to words closely.
- **Be attentive** to more than words.
- **Pay attention** to physical motions. They will be different in each sequence,, don't miss it.

Related Exercise:

[G 16] **CIRCLE OF SEQUENCES** – A word memory game that includes simultaneous sequences. It gets complicated!

Lessons:

- Focus outward –
- 🧠 Don't be in your head overthinking the game. ★ Be ready to take your turn.
- Be sure you're heard – Enunciate, make eye contact, and point. This helps your TMs.
- Each TM is 100% responsible for the success of the group – If a sequence is dropped, even if you didn't drop it, pick it up.

Focus on Success:

🧠 **Don't emphasize failure;** there are no “mistakes” on stage, only what happens. The audience only knows you've “messed up” if you tell them you have.

2.2 Listening to Build:

Build collaboratively, hear so you can accept. Show you accept your fellow TMs' contributions by heightening them with our own. [G 17]

Suggested Exercises:

YES, AND IT IS ____ - similar to “Yes, and” with the addition of “and it is.”

Lessons:

- **Focus outward** – Don't be in your head thinking about what you'll say. Focus out. Listen to what your TMs say. Build on that. SEE the object – use your *imagination* to visualize the object to inspire details. Get specific.
- **Build in the same direction** – Follow the group: if the subject is an *old* toaster, build out all the things that make it “old”; don't give new features to an old toaster.
- 🧠 Avoid contradictions.
- **Jokes** – Those made by building off each other's contributions will be funnier than those you force.
- **Dig deep into the details** – If the object is “An Asian elephant,” stay focused on an *Asian* elephant. Get more specific: “A Japanese elephant,” “An elephant whose tusks work as chopsticks when eating sushi.”
- **Setting, not spiking** – Don't worry about thinking of the funniest detail to add. Whatever you add could set up your TM for a humorous detail, made funnier because it appeared through collaboration.
- **Trust the direction of the group** – Commit to your TMs. 🧠 Don't force something totally new because you think the group needs a change.

EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

TMs should focus on having the SAME *EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVE* toward an object; if the first TM hates this toaster, ALL hate the toaster. [G17]

- It is easier to heighten details when you agree to an emotional perspective. “See” the object through that emotional perspective.
- **Share the air** – Hesitators, contribute! Stage hogs, give someone else a chance!


Related Exercise on next page.

EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVE continued:

Related Exercise:

PHRASE PASS – Like Action Pass, but with a Self-Contained Emotional Statement to start.

Lessons: [G18]

- All TMs create a Positive Feedback Loop. It will heighten everything you do. It will take you places no one could imagine or achieve on their own.
- **Allow evolution** – If all TMs concentrate on heightening what they see and hear, the phrase will naturally change. Embrace small changes to foster evolution.
-  Avoid forcing mutations that separate an individual from the group.

2.3 Memory: [G18]

Listen and *retain* so YOU can return to and heighten established information. Memory is muscle exercise.

Related Exercise:

STORY STEALING – TM's tell personal stories which are remembered and retold by another TM.

Lessons:

- **The more you remember, the more options you have** - You might not get the chance to revisit the story you remember best so you need to work to remember *everything*.
- **Remember specific** – Remembering specific details will be more powerful than remembering everything generally.
- **Remember reactions** – Your emotional reactions are improv gold; focus on those when setting other TM's stories to memory.
- **See what's not shown** – Recreating what your fellow TMs initially did subconsciously is great fun. How do they stand? How do they move? What do they sound like?

2.4 More than Words:

We must share focus with the group. Being aware of our physical positions in relationship to one another is a critical component of hearing and being heard. [G19]

Related Exercise:

ONE PERSON WALKING, A game of trading the power to walk.

Lessons: • Make eye contact. • Give and take focus. • Be willing to surrender focus to your scene partner.

2.5 Rhythm and Pacing: [G 19]

You can use **pacing** to evoke audience reactions if you can find the **rhythms**. Short Form game mechanics have an inherent rhythm you can use to ramp up, slow down or otherwise oscillate pacing.

Related Exercise:

FOUR CORNERS – a game of switching scenes by assignment of space.



Lessons:

- **Make quick choices – The more TMs on stage the less time there is to “figure out” what’s happening. Everyone is better off if each TM is committed to “feeling something about something” as soon as possible.**
- **Play to the moment, not for the Edit** – The “danger” of being aware of Short Form’s dictated mechanics is the temptation to play for the joke. **Instead**, trust that in-the-moment emotional reactions to imagined stimuli are the biggest laughs. **Play the long game of investing in the moment even if the moment is not very long.**
- **You can but don’t have to return where we left off** – More important is to follow the characters’ reactions. That can mean **following a timeline** (Ex: “Hi, I’m your babysitter,”/ “Please go to sleep,”/ “How are you still not asleep?”) or **bouncing through time** (Ex: “Hi, I’m your babysitter,”/ “Hi, I’m your TA,”/ “Hi, I’m your nurse.”)

Related Exercise:

SPACE JUMP –A sequence of changing scenes based on TMs physical position.

Lessons: [G 20]

- **Silence is fun** – Put more focus on embodying your reactions than explaining them.
- **Enthusiastic acceptance of your TM’s contribution is your superpower.** Immediately accept whatever world you’re brought to, and the audience will love you for it.
- **More people on stage necessitates more agreement** –
 Several TMs on stage all with different perspectives and characteristics get messy.
 **Agree with each other’s perspectives and mirror each other’s physicality.** This will minimize the amount of “stuff” on stage and focus the scene.
- **MORE PHYSICAL THE BETTER** – Justify your physical position/pose. Moving back and forth through scenes adds to the fun.

HOMEWORK –

[G 21]

Steal a story: Pick a friend who would not mind this. Steal one of their stories and retell it with heightened details and emotion. Pacing can help reveal that you are purposely stealing her story. Try to tell her story soon after she originally told it.

Notice Beat Structure in your favorite TV shows: Pay attention to progressions that show and heighten a behavior. Notice how those behaviors are flipped or addressed. Most TV comedies rely on arcing and resetting characters' behaviors in each episode.

Go see shows! Report back to me next week with examples of when the pacing of shows you saw engaged you and when it lagged.

IN CLOSING:

[HD]

Overcoming fear, a summary of pages from *Overcoming Fear, A guide for Budding Improvisers*, by Colin Thornton and Jon Ulrich. Visit the Fuzzy Improv page on CW4SP.com for its Amazon link.

> **Fear happens to everybody.** > You may fear several things: the unknown, losing control, public speaking, past negative or critical experiences or not being accepted.

> Three expressions of fear that are toxic to improvisors are *Fight, Flight and Freeze*.

Fear Expression #2, **FLIGHT**.

Fleeing is abandoning a scene by leaving the stage, skipping from topic to topic, or not being fully present.

The #1 reason students drop out early from an improv class is the Flight response.

Students perceived risk of failure is so intense they would rather quit than experience the potential embarrassment of “failing.”

Age is a case of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it don't matter.

—Satchel Paige:



Material for this lesson is based on

Improv As Improv Does Best

Curriculum,

Introduction to Improvisation by Patrick Gantz 2020.