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ACT

3

Handbook
for
Pedagogues

PROJECT
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ACT **3** Handbook
for
Pedagogues

**Developing Improvisational
Theatre as a New Approach to
Young Audience Development
in Theatre Arts**



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Introduction

The techniques of theatre improvisation offer an infinite source of inspiration - for creating improvised theatre events, preparing actors, training communication, strengthening group relationships, for a different way of learning and remembering, a higher social sensitivity and many other reasons. The possibilities of using impro games and techniques are as wide as our imagination. Through it, we get to know ourselves, each other, our surroundings, our beliefs and assumptions, our opinions and, of course, the language of theatre. Impro provides a safe environment with a lot of space for each individual and with the chance of learning through mistakes. Improvisation encourages and develops cooperation, respect, creativity, self-initiative, active participation, a relaxed body and mind, playfulness and several other skills that are important for both professional and personal lives.

One of the most important parts of improvisation is providing a safe environment with room for unique expressions of individuals. At the same time, this is a space of equality, shared responsibility, courage, risk, spontaneity, acceptance, enthusiasm and encouragement. A key feature of improvisation is most definitely learning by making mistakes. What is more, mistakes are celebrated, because they represent a source of inspiration, the possibility to grow, evolve, start anew, forget the set norms and patterns, but most of all, it offers a place for the discovery of everything unexpected and different. Accepting mistakes as a key part of learning is one of the most important lessons when improvisation is learned at school. Schools often represent a place of fear, wrong answers, shame and insufficiency and with the help of impro games, this place can be, even if it's just for a few moments, enchanted into a place of acceptance, fun and equality between teachers and students. This is why it is very important that teachers also play the games and scenes themselves, at least at the beginning, so that students see that teachers also make mistakes.

This is exactly why we are trying to implement improvisation as a constant in schools. The possibilities are endless: it could serve as a way of connecting students inside their own classes (camps, lessons with the class teacher, etc.) or as a separate activity that offers a different, more active way of responding to everyday situations and processing information. It also teaches students how to speak in public, how to react in unexpected situations, connect with people of the same or completely different opinions, build their self-esteem, etc. Impro techniques also come in handy when it comes to learning situations

- we can explain a certain topic in a different, more dynamic way, which causes the students to remember the materials better. Most of all, it is a fun way of groupwork, which celebrates the “here and now” and encourages the values that are important for building a mature, responsible, independent, confident, compassionate, accepting, conscious, thinking, sincere, brave and all in all an open personality who will be able to live a full life in every way possible.

I. Basic exercises

In this introduction, we provide a collection of games and scenes that will help you get to know the techniques and values of improvisation. Usually, we start with some name games to break the ice, then we warm up the voice, body and brain. What follows are impro disciplines - short scenes with some rules and stage tasks, where we improvise new situations every time, within the frame of set rules.

Impro can be defined as the art of spontaneous group creation, grounded on the basic principle “Yes, and...,” which represents accepting the ideas of others and upgrading them. Group creation is a fairly complex skill, especially if it is spontaneous and not set in advance. That is why there are lots of exercises made exactly for accepting your own ideas and the ideas of others (which are usually the first ones that pop into our mind, because it is difficult to find the exact right one in the short time-frame on the stage). This also means courage to accept some of the crazier ideas and awareness that each and every situation is possible and might just happen on stage. In this introduction, we also point out the main elements of impro creation - expressing movement, expressing emotion, building characters and telling stories, which can be upgraded later through exercises from different fields. Some of the main skills and values that are encouraged in basic impro games are: observation, listening, eye contact, reaction, easiness, cooperation, playfulness, clear speech, awareness of the body, concentration and focus, acceptance, inclusion, engagement, risk taking and shared responsibility. Let us not forget that mistakes are crucial and can be an endless source of fun and creative energy.

1.1 Names in a circle

1. Position: Everybody in a circle - sitting or standing up
2. Goal: To relax and to learn about the names of others.
3. How to play? The first player who starts says his own name and

points at someone else. Next one says her name and points at the third player, etc. This is stage one, you can play it for a short while. When people are a bit more relaxed, you can introduce stage two - when you point at someone, you should tell his name, he should point at someone else and tell her name. The last stage starts, when one of the players points at someone and the chosen one should tell the name of the first pointer.

4. Variations: Instead of names you can have other lists and maybe just have the first two rounds.

5. Suggestions: This can be the initial exercise for accepting failure, as a lot of the improvisers do not yet know the names of others in the beginning. We can actually encourage help of the group, relaxed attitude, laughter and guessing/taking risk.

1.2 Name and designation/The original name game

1. Position: Standing in a circle

2. Goal: To get to know the names and ideas of each other and start warming up the voice and the body.

3. How to play? One of the most basic name games. The players stand in a circle. Someone starts and says: "I am (name + something)!" and makes a movement with it. Everybody repeats after him: "Hello, name + something" and makes the movement. This game can be played in different ways:

- We can choose animals and movements that represent these animals (I am Ana as a dolphin) + mimes a dolphin

- The rule can be to name an object (and move accordingly) that starts with the letter of the name (I am Tom as trumpet)

- To the names, we can add adjectives/feelings and move accordingly (I am excited Tina)

The main rule is that every person chooses a concept and a movement to connect with their name (you can also connect this to the learning materials at school). The others then accept this and repeat it.

4. Variations: After one whole circle of repeating names, the group can only repeat the movements of every player, possibly several times/in slow motion/as fast as possible. Make different goals (once it's a competition of speed, another time it's important to work as a group, etc.)

5. Suggestions: At the beginning, you can allow the players some more time to think of their word and movement, because some may find it difficult (also because there's no right or wrong answer), but later, the

game should move quickly. Also, remind the group who wants to “help” with ideas that thinking for somebody else does not help - it only takes away the responsibility of making choices. In improvisation, just like in life, we have to be responsible for our own choices.

1.3 Walking names

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To learn about the names and start connecting movement and words/sounds.
3. How to play? A player (let's call him player 1) starts by calling someone in the circle. When this person (player 2) nods or makes a different, previously set sign (word or movement), player 1 starts walking towards player 2. He gently touches player 2, with which he lets him/her know that it's his/her turn. Now this second player has to call someone else's name and start walking towards a third person, etc. Later on, we can also leave out the names and just keep the eye contact.
4. Variations: The walking can be arranged into a list (for example, Mark always switches places with Mary) or we can add other set lists to practice multitasking. Somebody starts, extends her hand towards another player and says her own name (the hand stays extended to see who is already “taken”). The second person does the same, and so on, until the last person extends their hand towards the player who started the game. We can repeat this list again (possibly with eyes closed or by switching places, etc.). It is especially important to be responsible for our own list and repeat our own name as many times as it takes for the other person to remember what's going on and to continue with their own name. Instead of names, we can make a list with any category (names from a play, animals, fruit, instruments, favorite books, our greatest fears, etc.) and instead of walking, we can clap simultaneously (always clap with the same person).
5. Suggestions: The main goal of this exercise is to stay focused and react quickly. The connection of movement and memory is used too rarely, which is why this game can be used in a variety of contexts.

1.4 Zombie

1. Position: Standing in a circle, one player is in the middle
2. Goal: To avoid to get eaten by a zombie by relying on others for help.

3. How to play? One player is the zombie and stands in the middle of the circle. The zombie starts to move towards one person standing in the circle, zombie-style (slow, scary). Before reaching that player, that player needs to save himself, which he does with an intense stare at one of the other players in the circle. When the third player realizes the victim is looking at them, they have to save the victim from the zombie by yelling the name of any other player in the circle, which redirects the zombie. The zombie then heads towards that player. If the zombie reaches a player before he is saved by someone, that player becomes the zombie.
4. Variations: Whatever creature or selected character that is scary in any way can be chosen, together with all its physical characteristics. For younger participants you can have the version when the victim saves himself by saying some other name, but the original idea of not having all control all the time is definitely worth practising.
5. Suggestions: The mentor is there also to remind the zombie not to react to desperate cries of the person it's attacking. The zombie changes directions only after he hears a different name. The zombie is also the one who is responsible for the speed of the game - a slow zombie is boring and a fast zombie is uninteresting.

1.5 The cowboy game/The shootout

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To be the fastest and most persistent Cowboy in the group and to learn names.
3. How to play? The game starts with someone (usually mentor) saying someone's name. That player needs to drop to the floor (squat) as fast as he can. His neighbors shoot at each other; because he is in the middle of them, if he's not down fast enough, he dies. If he's down before the gun is fired, the neighbors have a duel between them and the one who fires last, dies. Sometimes they shoot at the same time, so they should recharge the gun and try again (click-bam!). One dies - sits on the ground or leaves the circle. Repeat until only two players are alive. Place those two back to back in the middle of the room. The one who died first can lead the last battle. She selects a category and starts naming things from that category (e.g. fruit, drama play titles, colors, etc.). For every item, the two cowboys make a step forward (apart from each other). When she names something that does not belong in the chosen category (e.g. a shoe), they turn around and shoot each other. At least one dies, and if they're not sure who shot first, they should both gladly die.

4. Variations: The last shootout can also be played in reverse - a person is naming everything that isn't fruit and when he says fruit, the shootout begins.
5. Suggestions: We recommend that the person who dies, calls the next person. This way all the players stay alert even after "dying" and don't think about the mistake they had made.

1.6 Names in two circles

1. Position: Players form two circles of similar sizes
2. Goal: To play it incredibly fast, to fail, to change circles a lot and to learn names.
3. How to play? In each circle, a player claps towards another player and says their name. When someone makes a mistake, he/she has to run into the other circle and continue playing there. The goal is to play so fast that we make a lot of mistakes and change circles a lot (but not on purpose).
4. Variations: start with one circle - when making a mistake, the first person just waits outside of the circle for other people to make mistakes and to create a new circle.
5. Suggestions: The game should be played very fast, with a lot of mistakes. Even if somebody hesitates and then tells the correct name, it should be taken as a mistake - this is to really understand that making mistakes is fun and that the game doesn't end with a mistake - it continues. The mentor's role here is to kindly and jokingly remind players to really switch circles, but also to keep the energy level high during the game.

1.7 Throwing associations/Free association game

1. Position: Sitting or standing in a circle
2. Goal: To react spontaneously and throw free associations - the first thing that come into our minds when hearing a certain word.
3. How to play? One player starts by saying a random word and looking at someone in the circle (or pointing at them). That player repeats the word and says the first thing that comes into his mind when he hears that word (or sound, in some variations) and look at someone else who repeats and passes a new word, etc.
4. Variations: This game has numerous variations and is one of the most

basic and core elements of impro. The game can be played alphabetically or only one category allowed, it can become a memory game if we repeat the whole chain. It is also a good base for multi task exercises and can be done with movement, sounds or mix-and-match style.

5. Suggestions: Associations is one of the best storytelling exercises, because it teaches us to trust our own choices and helps us understand where inspiration for spontaneous storytelling comes from. An association is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear a certain word and it can really be anything. This exercise is often unpopular, especially for large groups of children - it is usually played too slowly, because children think too much about the "right" answer and are not used to the fact that whatever they say will be ok. It is important to explain to the children that "helping" with ideas is not encouraged, because we are practicing our reactions when we are in the spotlight and under pressure.

1.8 Throwing sounds

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To warm up the vocal cords/voice, to be playful and relaxed.
3. How to play? One player starts by yelling, screaming, whispering, squeaking, etc. - so passing whatever voice-sound to another person in the circle. That person has to repeat the sound as similarly as possible and pass new sound to the next player.
4. Variations: We can make a chain of sounds that need to be repeated or choose a category (animal sounds, etc.). Add rules according to your or the students' wishes. One of the game variations includes an extra rule that the players must mime throwing a ball when throwing the sound towards somebody. This can help some children to visualize throwing sounds. The imaginary ball can also vary in size, depending on the sound (loud sound - big ball).
5. Suggestions: As the game progresses we can sometimes notice the patterns (similar length, volume, type of sounds, a rhythm), but want to avoid and break them, so encourage variety, playfulness, taking inspiration from others, precision with repeating, etc.

1.9 Mexican wave

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To repeat the movement and sound of the chosen player as

similarly as possible.

3. How to play? One player starts by making whatever movement and sound he chooses (it doesn't matter what, it just has to be a voice-sound connection), and the left neighbor repeats the exact same movement and sound, then the next and the next until the circle is finished (as dominos, the first one then repeats the original movement and sound so the circle is really finished). Then the next makes up his own movement and sound and everybody repeats it one after another.

4. Variations: You can play the game with amplifying/enlarging the movement and the sound or choosing only emotional sounds and movement, animal sounds, etc. One possible variation is also to copy the same sound and movement of the first player all the time with extra attention to every little detail of neighbor's movement and to copy it exactly - if we copy every laugh, every additional scratch, etc. the movement changes organically, without any invention (which is a good message for the scene as well - we do not need to invent all the time, we need to see what's already there).

5. Suggestions: When making a Mexican wave, we can add more rules, like presenting a movement and sound in a certain emotional state and then intensifying the state as the wave continues. An important rule here is also to prohibit any pre-existing words - only gibberish is allowed. If real words are used, children start putting too much attention to what is actually being said and not how it is being said (quietly, loudly, high/low voice, extended sounds, etc.).

1.10 Monkey in the bushes

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To create a group energy, rhythm and a relaxed environment by adding our own monkey ideas.
3. How to play? The mentor starts by saying/singing rhythmically: 'Monkey in the bushes' and mimes the movement of the monkey with the hands swinging in rhythm in front of the body. The group is encouraged to repeat everything they hear and see, so the rhythmic song and movement will grow. So they do: 'Monkey in the bushes.' Mentor: 'Monkey in the tall grass' (accompanied by acting as a monkey climbing in rhythm). The group moves and sings: 'Monkey in the tall grass.' Mentor: 'Monkey is swimming' (doing whatever swimming technique mentor monkey chooses to). The group: 'Monkey is swimming.' Mentor: 'Monkey is on fire!' and has hands on the head and mimes running/jumping on spot in rhythm as

if fire was on the floor underneath his feet. The group repeats: 'Monkey is on fire!' Mentor says: 'Monkey is sleeping' and again chooses whatever sleeping position he chooses to or just do the good old head on one side with hands together underneath the ears. 'Monkey is sleeping'. When the song is over, mentor makes up new activity that monkey is doing (e.g. Monkey is dancing) and adds movement, which everyone repeats, then the next player in the circle shows and tells a new activity and everybody repeats it and so on and so on. At the end the original song is performed one more time (the pace of the song can be higher at the end).

The original song:

Monkey in the bushes, monkey in the bushes,
monkey in a tall grass, monkey in a tall grass,
monkey is swimming, monkey is swimming,
monkey is on fire, monkey is on fire,
monkey is sleeping, monkey is sleeping.

4. Variations: You can make up your own song.
5. Suggestions: The game is made to practice playfulness, rhythm and group spirit. The movements should be big, emphasizing the rhythm and fun. The game was created by Domeka Parker and presented at one of the impro workshops in Slovenia.

1.11 Samurai

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To warm up body and voice and to create common rhythm.
3. One player is the Samurai, who starts by lifting the imagined Katana (sword) and making a loud fighting noise (e.g. HA!). When player's sword is still up in the air, the two neighbors swing their imagined swords into her sides (as to cut her), again making sound enthusiastically. When the neighbors retract their swords, the Samurai lowers her sword towards another player and makes a sound (HA!); while doing this she makes eye contact with another player, which then becomes Samurai and lifts the Katana: HA!
4. Variations: The rhythm can be slow at first and can gradually increase and become faster.
Instead of the constant sound (e.g. HA), you can add other sounds or different sounds (e.g. Ha-He-Hi-Ho-Hu). You can play the game with dropping out (other remaining players clap their legs twice, clap their hands twice, then pretend to use their Katanas and say HA! or invent

some other ritual so that the samurai who made the mistake or was too slow can pretend to die and leaves the circle).

5. Suggestions: This is a great exercise for your diaphragm (the fighting noise should be connected to the exhale from the belly and not from the throat).

1.12 The scream

1. Position: Sitting or standing in a circle
2. Goal: To make an eye contact and to scream loudly.
3. How to play? Sitting/standing in the circle, heads directed down towards the floor. On the sign (e.g. 1, 2, 3), everybody lifts their heads and either looks left or right. Whenever two players look each other in the eyes, they scream as loud as they can (as if they are startled) and then leave the game. Repeat till only one or two players are alive and have them seated, backs together. On the sign, they either turn their head left or right. If they look at the same direction, they scream.
4. Variations: People can look at whomever in the circle they want. You can change places after each round so it's harder for the group to preconceive their actions. You can play the game with the winner (odd number of players) but be careful if this is the case of the whole group not wanting to share eye contact with one person - MC can join the game to make it even.
5. Suggestions: Just like with other voice exercises, the use of the diaphragm is emphasized. The end goal is speaking by using the complete speech apparatus, not just the throat.

1.13 Fruit salad

1. Position: Chairs are placed in a circle, one player is standing in the middle of the circle, others are sitting around him
2. Goal: To find an empty chair and sit on it and remember as many words as one can when in the middle.
3. How to play? The player in the middle calls out a category (e.g. fruit, vegetables, favorite book, reasons to be late, things you are scared of, etc.). All players tell their answer one at the time and after everyone is done, the player in the middle tries to repeat as many answers as he can, and in the end, says 'Go' and tries to find an empty chair to sit on. When a player hears his word being repeated, he must leave the chair on 'Go'

and find another one. Person that doesn't find a chair becomes the next in the middle. None of the answers should be exactly the same (favorite color - blue and aquamarine blue, for example)

4. Variations: Categories can be very simple (fruit, colors, clothing, instruments, etc.) and we can get to know each other through the game (favorite food/film, what we are afraid of, what we want for our birthdays, what annoys you the most). We can also learn something new through this game or practice something we have already learned (English words, elements of the periodic table, etc.).

5. Suggestions: This is a great game for the group to learn about each other, find out our differences and similarities. We can also use it as a game of memory.

1.14 Clap game

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To be focused and follow the clap with the eyes and the whole body, then react to it.
3. How to play? One player starts by throwing a hand clap to another player in the circle and she passes the clap to another player. This is gradually played as fast as possible, while still retaining the rhythm and control. We can have more than one clap, but it is best to start with one.
4. Variations: The next step is a synchronized clap, where one player looks at his neighbor's eyes and they clap simultaneously. The neighbor then turns to her neighbor and they repeat the simultaneous clap. Play this till the clap really flows nicely around the circle. Then tell the group that players may decide to pass the clap back to the neighbor they got it from. Mentor can then add more than one clap (first in one direction only, later mix-and-match freely). Player can also decide to look at any other player in the circle and clap with him - while still trying to maintain the constant rhythm of the clap. Players can send out more than one clap - try clapping twice, three times or four times when you pass the clap. You can also play 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 variation in which first couple claps once, second couple twice and then accordingly (without counting out loud!).
5. Suggestions: The main goal is concentration and reaction, which is why this game should run very fast, on the brink of our abilities.

1.15 What an ass

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To create and keep the common rhythm, adapt to changing numbers, and fail happily (while still trying to play the game at our best).
3. How to play? One player is What an ass. The others, going clockwise, are numbered: 1, 2, 3 and so on. Now 'What an ass' establishes a four-beat rhythm, saying 'What an ass' four times (some groups add 'aha' at the end instead of the last 'What an ass') - and repeat this until everyone in the group got the common rhythm. The game then goes as follows: 'What an ass' passes the turn to someone else, saying 'What an ass - number 7' (this takes two beats) Number 7 then passes in two beats to, e.g. number 2, saying: '(number) 7 (to) (number) 2'. It then continues until someone makes a mistake: if and when that happens everyone says (in 2 beats): 'Oh Shit'. After that, the player that made the mistake becomes 'What an ass' and everyone's number changes, after which we repeat the beginning - What an ass (four times) and the game starts again.
4. Variations: Instead of 'What an ass', some groups use 'Big booty'. A base for a lot of other games when one has to say his/her name/number/ something first, and then calls someone else in the circle by their name/ number/something. Games that are similar are for example Lemons and Peter-Paul.
5. Suggestions: Games where we feel slightly odd or even a bit weird while playing them are common in impro. To be relaxed on stage and in life, one should overcome the uncomfortable feeling of "being weird" and even embracing it. When (especially) young figure out, that they are all in this together (nobody is weird if we are all weird) and that they can say words like "Ass" and "Shit" and even be complimented for that, it often becomes one of the groups' favorites.

1.16 Where are things in space

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To improve observation of the environment and play with our attention.
3. How to play? Players start walking around the space. Tell them that they should stop and close their eyes every time they hear a clap (and 'Stop!' if you add it). When this happens, the mentor asks a question, e.g.: 'Where does Mike stand?' Everybody should keep their eyes closed

and try to point to the direction where Mike supposedly stands. When everybody has decided (everyone should at least guess), tell them to open their eyes and see if this is true or not - but it doesn't matter if we failed, just so we learn how good we are at observation. This should be repeated with different categories of questions (Where does the person with red sweater stand; How many people in this room wear glasses - show with your fingers, eyes still closed); Where does the trash can stand; How many tables are there, etc.)

4. Variations: Everybody silently chooses one other player from the group and has to know at all times where this chosen person is when walking around (preferably so that you do not walk backwards to keep him in sight all the time, but risking, turning the back sometimes and relying just on the feeling as well). When 'Stop' or clap comes, they close their eyes again and show it. Then we add the second player that everybody has to choose silently (on whom we point with the other hand), and then the third (players will use one of the legs to show where their third chosen player stands) and lastly, the fourth, on which players point with their nose.

5. Suggestions: With all walking exercises mentor can remind improvisers to walk with relaxed bodies, look straight ahead, have hands loose on the side, cover the whole space, don't walk in circles and break the patterns, etc.

1.17 Yes, let's!

1. Position: You can start the game in whatever position you like
2. Goal: To cheerfully accept and give offers.
3. How to play? One starts by saying what the whole groups should do to which the whole group must respond 'Yes, let's!' and do it. Someone else proposes something else, again: 'Yes, let's!' etc.
4. Variations: This can be played totally random (players yell whatever they want) or you can build the story/scene together (e.g. pirates). It can be played with the whole group at the same time or divided into smaller groups.
5. Suggestions: Sometimes groups refuse to say 'Yes, let's' - does not have to be said, as long it is practically done. It is very important for all to support every idea - even if one does not like it, first accept, then change. The best changes are those which represent an upgrade from previous suggestions and don't deny them.

1.18 Freeze/Stop

1. Scene: Half of players on one side of the stage facing the other that are on the opposite side, the middle is empty, the position can change with variations
2. Goal: To start the new scene out of the frozen picture - body position of players in the previous scene.
3. How to play? Two players start the scene. They can start with the inspiration of a suggestion (a location, their occupation or relationship, a problem, etc.) or even invite two volunteers to put them into body position from which they will start the scene.

At any point in time during the scene any side player can call 'Freeze/Stop', which makes the two players to stand still in whatever body position they have during that time. This player then tags out one of the two players and takes his place and his exact body position (and facial expression). Both players then start a completely new scene, with new character and in new location, justifying their positions and changing their meaning.

4. Variations: The one who is tagged out, can suggest one of the aspects of the scene (location, emotion, problem, etc.), which may or may not suit the body position the other players are in.

Blind Freeze/Stop: One player turns his back to the scene and counts to 30 and says 'Freeze/Stop' (useful with excited groups that have problem with patience and observing). He turns around and takes place of one of the two players and continues the scene, while the third player turns his back to the scene and counts to 30, etc.

Blind freeze/stop can be played so that all players turn their backs to the scene and say 'Freeze/Stop' without seeing what the body positions are.

5. Suggestions: Freeze tag is one of the most known and widespread impro games. It is very important for improvisers to exactly copy the body position of the previous improviser, which gives inspiration for the new scene with new activity.

1.19 Square

1. Scene: Four players stand in a square position; two in the first part of the stage, two behind them in the back
2. Goal: To have four different scenes, of which we always watch the one which is in the first part/in front of the stage.
3. How to play? Audience suggests some contextual information for

the two players in front (a location where the scene will take place, a relationship between the characters, situation, historical era, etc.) Then the players are asked to turn the square (to the right or to the left - players move for one spot in the square in that direction). So now there is a different combination of players in front. These two get another audience suggestion. We do that until players take their original position.

The two players in front start improvising a scene. Players play until the mentor (MC) yells 'Left' or 'Right' (or even: 'Two times right/left!'), and square turns accordingly. The two players in front start playing a scene based on their suggestion (and which has usually no connection to previous scene) until mentor calls again.

This is repeated. When two players are up in front for the second or third time, they continue their previously played scene. They can either plainly continue it or continue at some time in the future (a day later, a year later, a century later).

4. Variations: This game can be a good base for variations, as it is also possible to have the scenes connected, play the same story or have the players play the same character in both scenes they are in, or to give any other addition missions or limitations (every scene has different level of emotion played in the scene, every scene is played in different genre - movie or theatre, every player has different technique - gibberish, silent, etc.).

It can be played as a triangle as well (one in the back, two in the front) and can be played without the MC - one of the players on the stage initiates the turn of the triangle/square (could be without saying as well, just clear intention and fast change of places).

It can be played with extra suggestion of common theme that connects all scenes (e.g. holidays).

Two players that are in the back can become background statues or objects that change according to the scene's atmosphere and location.

5. Suggestions: As all other impro scenes and games, you can time the scene (most of the scenes could be 3-4 minutes long) and change the pace of the scene. The exercise can be used to explain the basic structure of the story - first part of the scene is exposition and rising action, second part is climax and the third part falling action and conclusion.

1.20 Who/where/what

1. Scene: Everybody in 2 lines
2. Goal: To build a platform for a scene and practice acceptance (Yes,

and).

3. How to play? First person from one line starts doing (miming) a silent activity (e.g. fishing). First person from the second line observes the silent scene, decides on the character and situation and approaches the first player (e.g. 'Honey, I brought you some lunch'). Usually only beginnings of the scenes are played, then the mentor uses 'Thank you!' to encourage first two players to walk at the end of the line - and then a new pair of players builds a new platform (with different activity).

4. Variations: One sentence rule can be introduced (so each player can only give limited amount of information, which is useful, when trying to learn about shared responsibility) or trying the same activity for different scenes, to explore the circle of possibilities.

5. Suggestions: It is all about platform, naming, adding information, showing, not only telling, listening and responding with rich and useful information.

1.21 This is not a stick/Unknown object

1. Scene: Half of players on one side of the stage facing the other that are on the opposite side, the middle is empty

2. Goal: To use an object/prop for some other use than it is primarily used for and instead of another (usually in at least somewhat connected and similar) object.

3. How to play? Mentor puts an object/a prop on the stage - this time the real, material one (e.g. a drumstick). One player starts and uses drumstick for anything else except for drumming (e.g. start the scene with drumstick being used as a microphone, or a whistle or a lollipop, etc.). Next player says 'Freeze/Stop', takes the object and uses it for something else.

4. Variations: It can be done in couples and with the added possibility of more players in the scene. It can be done as a series of not connected ideas but can be upgraded into a flow - longer improvisation where the object is slowly transforming.

5. Suggestions: Show, don't tell - you can discourage naming the object (whereas naming invisible objects is encouraged to some extent). We can also add the 10 seconds rule, as some of the groups can be overly enthusiastic and don't let each other enough of the time to perform - therefore everybody should count to 10 before saying Freeze/Stop.

II. Nonverbal communication - Body movement

Expression of movement is very important when it comes to improvisation, because of the so-called “naked stage,” which means that there are no scene elements (costumes, props, etc.) on the stage, except from a few chairs. This is why handling invisible objects and their imagination are crucial. Because there are no costumes, it is so much more important to use our body for gestures and mime in order to reach a transformation. Otherwise, the audience and co-actors will not get enough information to clearly understand what or whom we are trying to represent. However, this exact disharmony between what we are trying to show and what others see is something worth exploring (people don’t understand my signs like I want them to). At the same time, these misunderstandings can lead into wonderful humorous and spontaneous scenes, where we try to justify the disharmonies.

Using, knowing and being aware of their own bodies through impro can help young people to accept changes in their bodies, compare experiences with their peers and promote a relaxed but deeper understanding of body language. As you can imagine, this doesn’t only benefit the young. The body is something that is oftentimes forgotten not only by adults but even by successful improvisers - wishing to achieve humorous situations, many rely solely on verbal comedy. With the intention to use impro pedagogically (and also in general), we state over and over again that there are different forms of impro theatre and that an active usage of the body is crucial for putting yourself into a character’s shoes. In the end, physicality is fun both for the performers and the audience. At school, we can repeat the newly learned topics and train memory with the help of movement, because it can help greatly with connecting, processing and refreshing information.

The emphasis, when playing movement games, is on reactions, relaxed but controlled body, cooperation, freedom, touch, exploring personal space, feelings of (dis)comfort, body language, observation, repetition, gestures, walking, body positions, emotions, etc.

2.1 Walking as...

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To imagine and embody different characters and think about what they do, how they do it, how their body position looks and feels, etc.

3. How to play? Players start walking around the space. The mentor yells, for example: 'Let's walk as detectives!' Everybody starts to act as they think a detective does, with emphasis on variety of characters and individual actions that can lead to non-verbal communication between different detectives. After a while mentor says 'Let's walk as...' again and chooses another being, creature, object, whatever imagined.
4. Variations: We can add sounds or text to the game. Also, the mentor's instructions can be more detailed (Let's walk as tired detectives, etc).
5. Suggestions: The emphasis is on diversity and exceeding stereotypes, which are usually the ones people begin with. There's nothing wrong with this, but we should actively encourage them to be creative and to think about different options and variations inside a category/profession/character. The exercise is also useful for thinking about details (if we say "Walk like a grandmother," many people will hunch their backs and barely move, which isn't wrong, but when they think about how their own grandmother walks, it might just be normal walking).

2.2 Walking on ...

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To imagine different surfaces to walk on and try to walk just as if the surface would be under our feet.
3. How to play? Players start walking around the space. The mentor yells, for example: 'Let's walk on the hot sand!' All players start to act as if there would be hot sand on the floor. After a while mentor changes it again. Possible surfaces: quicksand, grass, honey, mud, water of different depths, anthill, rocks, ice, concrete that is drying - so the whole group should have the same pace of walking and being stuck until they all freeze simultaneously.
4. Variations: The mentor can also add other elements (for example clap, squat, turn, jump over an obstacle,..) and the players have to execute these actions, bearing in mind the surface they're walking on. From this game, you can act out a scene on a special surface or mix and match it with some other activities.
5. Suggestions: Watching others is important. However, we shouldn't copy them: we should encourage diversity, different ways of expressing ourselves and exploring the movement on different surfaces.

2.3 One part of the body guides you

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To explore different movements and walks that can help us build different characters.
3. How to play? Players start walking around the space. Mentor names one part of the body which will lead the movement of the characters and their body position. Players start to walk around in different manners and thinking about what kind of character could walk like this. After a while, a new body part is called out.
4. Variations: This is an exercise for building characters. At the end, we can describe the character, make an interview with him/her, etc.
5. Suggestions: Trying to connect the psychological characteristics with the physical ones - what does it mean for the character, if the nose is leading him/her? Is he/she curious, pushy?

2.4 Atoms

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To make different frozen pictures/statues according to the rules.
3. How to play? Have people walk around the stage/room. When you yell a number and name a body part, players should immediately form groups that fit the number and are all touching each other with the named part of the body (e.g. '3, elbow' means players have to form groups of three, where all three members of the group are touching with their elbows). Instead of a body part you can also yell the title of the frozen picture (e.g. Little red riding hood and the wolf, Royal family of 4, Bad date, etc.). Instead of the title you can also yell forms, objects or machines, e.g. 3, square - groups of three people have to form a square with their bodies - 4, car, etc.
4. Variations: Play as much as you want by adding different rules and categories. You can also use the name of the picture and the number of players more than once to find the forms that are not just the obvious ones (you can yell '3, square' three times in a row and encourage players to find as many different ways of being/portraying a square with three bodies as possible). You can encourage moving objects to leave the frozen form and to move (if they have to form a car or a machine that makes something, encourage them to move and to be as synchronized as possible).

Use it for the start of a scene - different body positions are a great inspiration for the action.

5. Suggestions: When showing objects, we can allow the group to communicate, however, the rule can also be to work in complete silence. We can also limit the time of setting the picture by counting to 10 or 20.

2.5 Tableaux/Picture

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To form a frozen picture based on a suggestion
3. How to play? We set a random situation and the players have to form a frozen picture of this situation. Example: beach. One player lays on the floor and pretends he's sunbathing, another one is a parasol, one is walking into (cold) water, the fourth one is picking mussels, the fifth one is a mussel, and so on. We can also set more detailed rules, like the beach in winter or the beach in the morning, etc. By doing this, we encourage diversity, representing objects, freezing an action, ...
4. Variations: There are many variations of this game, like making a story out of frozen images (Little Red Riding Hood in 3-6 frozen pictures), an imaginary situation in several frozen pictures, vacation pictures, etc.
5. Suggestions: Diversity in positions, characters and cooperation between players. With each picture, we can ask the audience different questions. Their answers will let us know if the players' ideas coincide with the actual picture. This is an extremely useful exercise for starting scenes.

2.6 Clap-stomp

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To create rhythm that does not stop even when you introduce disruptions, pauses and change.
3. How to play? Look around the circle and find a way to visually divide players into two groups (gender, dark/light shirt, glasses/no glasses, dark-haired/light-haired, etc.). Decide on which player will have clap and which player stomp (e.g. women have stomp, men have clap). Decide on the person who starts. E.g., if it is a woman, we will all stomp and if it is a man, we will all clap. The circle continues clockwise - the whole group clapping once if it is man's turn or the whole group stomping if it is woman's turn. We are trying to establish a rhythm that is fast, but still

controlled. When we master that, we can add some rules to make the game more challenging.

4. Variations: You can add the possibility of ducking/squatting, where one ducks ('rests') which means that when it should be this player's turn, there is a pause in the rhythm. You can also add the possibility of switching places in the circle, which changes the rhythm and brings new challenge. (For beginners it is enough to switch places with the neighbour, if the circle is big enough and the group is synchronized, you can advance to switching with whomever you like). For younger groups it can be done only with the basic version, but can be, for example, done with eyes closed.

5. Suggestions: The game can be quite difficult but it's definitely worth the try, because it increases concentration and connects the group. It encourages movement coordination and following the rhythm. We can also add extra sounds to it.

2.7 Mirror games

1. Position: Everybody in 2 lines facing each other, the position can change with variations

2. Goal: To be as synchronized as possible with our partner in movement, gestures and expressions

3. How to play? Mirror games are made for observation and thorough repetition. The basic mirror game has players on one side, who start with random movements and their partners on the other side watch them and mirror them as closely as possible. After a while, they switch - the ones who were leading, are now following, mirroring. The last stage is where no one is leading or following but rather do it as synchronized as possible with careful focus, with one of the partners maybe leading a bit, than the other takes over, and the smallest movement can be a hint of where to go next.

3. Variations: The game can be executed as a parallel scene or that couples are freely placed in the room. In any variation of this game, the emphasis should be on flowing movement that enables following, because the goal for both players is to move simultaneously.

4. Suggestions: This is one of the most basic exercises for detailed observation and repetition, which are crucial skills for improvisation as well as for life in general. The more thorough we are, the more we can control our bodies. Our attention is focused on the partner and this way we can move as simultaneously as possible.

2.8 Half time

1. Scene: Usually for 2 players
2. Goal: To try to repeat the same scene again and again in shorter and shorter time and thus finding the main point and action of the scene.
3. How to play? Halftime is an impro discipline, where two players perform a short scene (1 minute long). Then ask the players to repeat the scene in 30 seconds. Next, they repeat it in 15 seconds, then 7,5 seconds, 3 seconds and they can finish it off in just 1 second.
4. Variations: Starting a scene in the middle of the action; change the original time of the scene (for example 2 minutes); shorten it as you wish.
5. Suggestions: A very useful exercise for practicing attention and stage action, also for getting the gist of a scene (to shorten it, you have to know what exactly it's about).

2.9 Expert Gibberish

1. Scene: At least 2 players
2. Goal of every gibberish game: To communicate in a made-up language, which develops both the creativity in making up a new language as well as nonverbal communication, which has to be very present if the audience wants to understand, what someone is trying to say.
3. How to play? Gibberish is a made-up language that doesn't exist and each person's gibberish is different. Gibberish can just be a syllable or sound (for example "papa papapapapa papa pa") or it can be something that resembles real language, including pauses, words, stresses, etc. (a made-up sentence can be "Hamula garabi mekunde! Mekunde!") - so we can also repeat some made-up words. Gibberish offers a similar tool as playing in silence - the players discover, how important their gestures are, their intonation, facial expressions and not just words or language itself. A basic gibberish game is called Expert Gibberish. It's for three players: one is a TV show host, one is an expert from a foreign country and the third one is the interpreter. The expert only speaks in gibberish, the host asks question in his/her native language and the interpreter translates.
4. Variations: Gibberish can be used in many ways, for example: the whole scene is in gibberish and everybody has to pretend they understand it and just talk like nothing special is happening. Another one is gibberish virus: somebody starts speaking in gibberish and when he/she touches someone else, they start speaking in gibberish, and so on. When you

pass your gibberish, you start speaking in your native language again. Another variation of the Expert Gibberish is that there are two experts who are having a debate about some topic and there can also be two interpreters.

5. Suggestions: Gibberish can also be based on a foreign language - this doesn't mean that we actually speak that language, for example French. We just try to capture the intonation, rhythm and sound of French in French gibberish.

2.10 Interpretation for the deaf

1. Scene: Usually for three players
2. Goal: To create a TV (or some other) interview, which is accompanied by the translation for the deaf.
3. How to play? One of the players is an expert on a topic provided by the audience, another one is the interviewer. The third player provides simultaneous interpretation for the deaf, using 'sign language' (e.g. uses different gestures and body movements for interpretation - creating silent language by repeating the same gestures/movement for the same words).
4. Variations: This game can be used as a tool for some other scenes - somebody is using their bodies and gestures to interpret what is going on.
5. Suggestions: Gestures, movements and facial expressions should be explicit and big. The people who speak on stage should bear in mind that there is an interpreter and should speak clearly and slowly enough for the interpreter to follow without trouble.

2.11 Helping hands expert

1. Scene: Usually for three players
2. Goal: To explore gestures and different forms of communication. Two players act as one person and have to be as synchronized as possible.
3. How to play? Two players act as one person - the expert. One of the players only uses his/her voice with the hands behind his/her back. The second player stands behind the first one and provides the arms. There should be a third player who can be a host of a TV show or something similar and interviews the expert. In this game, the hands are leading, which means that the person speaking has to wait to see what movement they make and then find inspiration in the movement to start talking.
4. Variations: The discipline called Helping hands, which is a variation of

this game, is played in pairs - one player is the hands and the other one the body and voice. In this version, the voice has to tell a story and the hands follow the story with appropriate gestures and reactions.

5. Suggestions: Cooperation between the speaker and the hands is in a way alternate, which means that the speaker can also encourage the hands to make a gesture (for example, when the speaker introduces himself to someone, the hands reach out for a handshake). It is a form of cooperation and exploration of gestures, where we also explore touch, closeness and contact - the players have to stand very close to each other, the hands should also touch the body and face, for example.

2.12 3 Location, occupation, object

1. Scene: Usually for 4 players
2. Goal: To mime in telephones, where we discover nonverbal communication.
3. How to play? 3 players leave the room so they don't hear what's going on, and the fourth one is assigned a place, a profession and an object by the audience - the three shouldn't be connected to each other. The first player comes in and acts out three short scenes with the player already on stage. The first scene represents the chosen place, the second one the profession and the third one the object. This is a miming game, so there are no words used, however we encourage using sound and/or gibberish. When the first player is showing the place, the one guessing doesn't just stand there but tries to repeat the actions or guess through acting (for example, if he thinks the place is the supermarket, he mimes walking with a cart). When he guesses the place, he shouldn't say it out loud but mime it. Without knowing if he got it right or not, he has to show it to the third player who comes into the room. When the first player shows the place, profession and object, he kills the second player with that object, which closes the first part of scenes. The second player repeats everything to the next player (we encourage creativity, doing it in their own way, and so on until the last player. At the end, we discover in reverse what the players were guessing and the first player tells the starting suggestions loud and clear.
4. Variations: Instead of place, profession, object, we can mime a sequence of events/ a story.
5. Suggestions: This is a wonderful exercise to think about showing a certain place - with action, activities in this place, etc. It is also a great practice for acting and guessing at the same time - even though we are

not completely sure what's going on, we have to pretend to know more and act the scene out.

2.13 Exotic sport

1. Scene: Usually for 4 players
2. Goal: To present a non-existing sport to the public, usually in slow motion.
3. How to play? We're watching a television show with a host, interviewing the coach of some sport that the audience thinks of. The sport should be something that doesn't really exist, like picking flowers with obstacles, speed recycling, etc. in the back part of the stage, there are two players who present a video of this sport - usually in slow motion. The scene can be an interview between the coach and the reporter, who include videos of the sport in their talk.
4. Variations: We can also suggest a country where the sport and the coach come from. The video can be manipulated - close-up, speed-up, slow down, wind it backwards or forward...
5. Suggestions: This scene is about a dialogue between the mute representation of the sport and the interview that is going on at the same time. The goal is to offer as many information about the new sport - practically and verbally, connecting the information and building on them.

III. Storytelling

Stories are all around us. What we say and live through, all the art in the world, everything around us - all of that can be verbalized into a story.

Storytelling is a very wide and independent area and that's why improvisation uses storytelling as a form of group storytelling, spontaneous storytelling and making up sensible and original stories. We all know how to tell stories. In fact, everyday conversation is basically just exchanging stories. However, when we have to tell a story together as a group, we start to exaggerate because of different reasons, we don't accept what other people have contributed to the story, we forget about a character's fate, etc. This is why practice is crucial.

At the beginning, you can encourage the speed of storytelling even if the stories seem illogical, uninteresting or start flowing in a completely different direction - these are mistakes we can all learn from. Oftentimes it is enough to just ask the group, where they think things went south in the story and their answers are usually very true and legitimate. In the end we see that if we commit to what is being told, the starting information already help the story to unfold in front of us and that the best stories are usually predictable (because what comes into your mind first is usually the most sensible thing). Simple is always better than complicated and a combination of different details is what we try to teach improvisers through experiences.

The final goal of storytelling is mostly controlling different techniques for a more flowing and livelier story, expanding imagination, listening and considering the set elements, with final goal of relaxed and fluent storytelling.

3.1 I am a tree

1. Position: Standing in a circle
2. Goal: To make associations with the help of which we can build a story and the base of the scene.
3. How to play? The players stand in a circle. One steps into the middle and says "I am (whatever, for example an apple)" and takes the form of an apple. Another player joins him and says something that fits the previous object (for example, "I am a worm"). Then, a third player joins them and tries to be something that connects both of these objects ("I am a person who has just bit into the apple."). Then, the first one of the three players choose one to take with (for example, he takes "the person eating an apple") and so these two players leave the picture. In the middle, the second player is left, who repeats "I am a worm.", and is joined by a new

player who says, for example, “I am a fisherman.” The picture is again completed by a third player connecting these new two things together (like “I am a hook). In time, we build more and more complex stories and their upgrades (a player can come and represent an emotion instead of an object).

4. Variations: Instead of three, there can be a different number of players in each picture. The main rule can also be different - three things/elements/ words that go together even though they aren't the most obvious or logical beginning of a story (for example president, pregnancy, pretzel.)

5. Suggestions: The game is made for playing with imagination - the more playful the players, the more interesting the stories get. However, pay attention to the difference between simply listing and detailed descriptions that offer a much richer starting point to begin a story (for example what's the difference between “I am an apple, I am a pear, I am a sieve” and “I am a pear in love, I am a jealous apple, I am an old-fashioned sieve”).

3.2 Common word

1. Position: Sitting or standing up in a circle - depends on the variation
2. Goal: That two players say the same word at the same time. When this happens, all the players change their places.

3. How to play? A player starts by saying “1”, someone else says “2”. They look into each other's eyes, say ‘1,2,3’ and each says one random word at the same time - e.g. one says ‘light’ and the other says ‘cat’. Then someone who has an idea what could join those two words (in this case cat and light) says ‘1’, someone else in the circle who has an idea for word says ‘2’, they look each other, count 1,2,3 (counting is for the rhythm - if one of the players forgets his word while counting, he can stop the counting and they can start again) - and say two new words (e.g. eyes and night) and someone else who has an idea, what could join ‘eyes’ and ‘night’ says ‘1’, someone else says ‘2’, etc. We play this as long the two people say the same word at the same time. After success, we cheer and usually change places of the players in the circle.

4. Variations: You can play the game in pairs, sitting or standing.

5. Suggestions: The game can sometimes take a long time, but it's worth it. The cheering that happens when two people succeed is very rewarding and it connects the group in an instant. After success, we change places to avoid possible patterns.

3.3 Emotion, action, detail

1. Position: Two people facing each other - standing or sitting, depends on the variation
2. Goal: to tell a story individually, with emphases on different aspects of the story.
3. How to play? Two people face each other - one will tell the story/ monologue and the other will help him. The helper marks three spots in front of him and/or chooses three objects that will represent emotions, actions and details (e.g. a book, a spoon and a scarf). When the storyteller starts, the helper listens to the story and lifts in the air whatever object - element of the story - he misses or would like to hear more of (e.g. if he lifts the book in the air, it means the storyteller should put more focus on the emotional state of character, if he lifts spoon, the action/the general story line should be moving forward and if he lifts scarf, the storyteller should include more specific details in the story.
4. Variations: There can be one storyteller and the whole group moves from action to detail or to emotion - it is important to know that not all audience members are the same - some prefer more action, some more emotion, etc. But if most of the group stands on the same spot, it is quite clear what is missing in the story. In a similar game, you can throw your partner random words he needs to insert in the story.
5. Suggestions: Most players find this game difficult but the stories that come up this way are oftentimes extremely spontaneous, interesting and unexpected, they build up the player's self-esteem and are all in all unique.

3.4 One word at a time story

1. Position: Sitting in a circle or standing in line - depends on the variation
2. Goal: That a group/pair tells a story together, each player contributing just one word at a time.
3. How to play? Sitting in a circle, every player tells a word. The players have to listen carefully to each other, make relatively short sentences and be careful about the sentence structure. Example: 1: There 2: Was 3: Once 4: A 5: Farmer 1: Who 2: Had 3: A 4: Brave 5: Daughter ... At the beginning, we can define the title, even genre that have to be considered while telling the story.
4. Variations: The game can also be played in pairs and enriched with movement - if the players do that, they will predict the story more easily

and the story will flow faster and more fluent.

Another variation is called 1234321: the story is being told in a circle where each player says one word in the first circle, two words in the second circle, three words in the third circle, then four and then back to three, two, one. In this variation, we have to pay special attention to the dramatic triangle because the story should be, if it's possible resolved and it should end with the last word of the last player.

5. Suggestions: This is also one of the basic exercises to practice group storytelling. After the game has finished, you can also talk to your group about how they felt during the game - often they will express frustration towards their peers because they took the story in a different way. But in improvisation, adjustment is one of the key goals - in each moment, we have an idea about the story but in each moment, we should also be prepared to let that idea go and adjust it to the new story that is being formed. The best stories are usually the ones that are rough in its structure but still very simple and predictable, because this way the group can harmonize. And let's not forget about emotions and a lively rhetoric!

3.5 Story in line

1. Scene: Standing in line, usually 4-5 (or more) players
2. Goal: To tell a story together by mentor showing who should currently be telling the story.
3. How to play? Four or five players stand in a line. Mentor has something to point at different players with (a broom, a pen, an umbrella, an arm), and he also picks the suggestion for the title of the story from the audience (and sometimes the genre of the story as well). The mentor points at someone who starts telling the story. As long as he is pointing, the player talks, when he moves the object and points to another player, the next player should continue the story and the previous player stops talking. Mentor also changes pace and rhythm of the switches.
4. Variations: There is a variation of the game, where you introduce 'Drop dead', which is something audience (and mentor) yells cheerfully, when a player has made a mistake (stutter, too long pause, confusion, etc.). The audience then decides on the object or reason for the player's death (which is never a weapon by itself, so no guns, etc.) and he has to act it out (he has to play a solo scene where he has to play a character who dies because of, e.g. a stamp/too much homework/love/etc.).
5. Suggestions: The story can also be directed by a player. It is important that the player keeps the rhythm and tempo of switches at a different

pace. We have to be very exact with these changes - if one of the players has to finish in the middle of the sentence, the other player has to finish that same sentence. An extremely useful exercise for listening carefully.

3.6 Tap out

1. Scene: Half of the players on one side of the stage, the other half opposite them
2. Goal: To improvise short scenes that are connected to each other by different characters.
3. How to play? The middle of the stage is empty, players stand on each side. Two players come up on stage, they start a scene (usually with suggestion from the audience of some sort). After a while one of the side players can step into the scene, taps on the shoulder one of the players on stage and replaces him. The player that remained on stage, plays the same character as in the previous scene, so now we see him interacting with a different character, connected to him - storyline may continue or not (e.g. if first scene was about doctor and the nurse, one player can tap out the nurse and play doctor's wife).
4. Variations: The game can be played without keeping the body positions, but we can make it more difficult with extra rules (emotions, secrets, goals, etc.).
5. Suggestions: This exercise is a great tool for understanding the complexity of characters and assembling a longer story (improvised to begin with, but you can make a script out of it). We encourage switching the places in the story and clear beginnings of scenes, so that players can easily get accustomed to the situation. The scenes should be of different length, watching out for rhythm (if one scene includes a lot of speech, the next one should include more movement/action and less speech).

3.7 Word at a time expert

1. Scene: Usually 4 players, three chairs together, one extra
2. Goal: To have an interview, which is as normal as possible, but three players who speak one word at a time play the expert.
3. How to play? One of the players is the interviewer and the other three an expert. To every question, they answer as one person, each player saying one word at a time (like 1: Good 2: Morning 3: To 1: You 2: Too!).
4. Variations: the more difficult variation is that the three players who are

the expert, speak at the same time (one mouth).

5. Suggestions: It is important that the three expert players really make the same gestures, voice, to really make an illusion of one person. At the beginning, we can set a leader (usually the person sitting the closest to the interviewer) and the other two players have to follow his lead. An upgrade of this is for the players to just do it spontaneously (everybody leads and follows).

3.8 Typewriter

1. Scene: One player (narrator) sits on a chair on the side of the stage (sometimes wearing a microphone), the middle of the stage is empty. You can play the game with several players; the best choice is between 6 and 20 actors.
2. Goal: Narrator is telling a story; meanwhile the other players are acting the story out.
3. How to play? One of the players (if it is a group of younger children, this can be a mentor) is the writer, who is sitting, telling the story and typing it on his typewriter. The other players act the story out with movements.
4. Variations: We can choose the genre of the story beforehand. If the scene starts falling apart, the narrator can save it by deleting what he just wrote or tears a page out of his notebook - rewind and start over.
5. Suggestions: This game is about cooperation between the narrator and other players. They shouldn't only follow what the narrator says - the narrator must also leave some room for the players to say something and change the course of the story. The acting can be an inspiration to continue the story. The game is fairly difficult because it can quickly lead into chaos or an empty place on stage, so we can use several tools to help: creating an atmosphere (narrator describes the space and the players show it with their bodies - they represent flowers, objects, animals, making sounds, etc.), describing characters in detail, switching the tempo of narrating, and other random elements. It is very important for the players to be aware that the narrator is the "leader", so he can take charge in the case of chaos.

3.9 Alphabet game

1. Scene: Usually for two players
2. Goal: To form all the replies according to the alphabet.

3. How to play? The scene consists of 25 replies (or 26, depending on how many letters a language has in the alphabet). The first word of the first reply has to begin with the letter that the audience picks (for example "R") and the audience also picks the place of the scene and relationship between the characters. The co-player's reply then has to start with "S" and so on until they use all the letters of the alphabet (after "Z" comes "A"). The scene ends with the same letter as it started - in this case, the last reply begins with "R".
4. Variations: The replies can be of different lengths, but rules can be added (like each player has to say only one sentence).
5. Suggestions: The reply is everything a player can say. At the beginning, we can help the players by writing the alphabet on pieces of paper and the audience can hold the letters up. Later on, the audience can only help by whispering the next letter or making sounds with that letter. The goal is that the players act out the scene without any help. The players can also help each other incognito.

3.10 3 monologues

1. Scene: Three players stand in line in the middle of the stage
 2. Goal: To form three monologues of three different characters who were at the same event and tell a story from their own perspective about the event
 3. How to play? The audience suggests a location or event that all three characters attended. One player starts by telling a monologue of a chosen character (e.g. a child who talks about the best day she had when she went to the theme park). After a while another player steps forward and 'the child' steps back, the new player tells the story of a new character (e.g. old lady talks how she got lost on her usual walk and wandered into the theme park). Later, the third steps in the front (e.g. the security guard) and they randomly trade places in telling their side of the events of the day. The stories do not have to be synchronized in time but should be connected through some core actions and details of the story, which can be perceived differently by the characters.
 4. Variations: We can have more than 3 improvisers/monologues. Instead of three different characters we can have monologue of one character told by three improvisers - one puts emphasis on action, second on details in the story and the third focuses on the emotions of the spoken monologue.
- We can also add the rule that the characters that are not talking, should

be frozen in a typical pose for them or should perform silent actions - but with great awareness on the listening to the stories of others, so they can use the bits and pieces of the story in their own monologue as well.

5. Suggestions: The characters can also be animals or objects that were present at the event (for example how did the flower/red/mat/fly comprehend the event). It is important that the reality, which is presented by a character, is not denied or blocked by another character - it can be upgraded, players can react differently or even understand it differently, but they all have to accept what has been told before. The players should also take the tempo and rhythm of changes into account.

3.11 Chinese box/Scene replay/Style replay

1. Scene: Usually for two or three players, depending on the variation
2. Goal: To act out a scene and then repeat it several times in different ways. The scene can be acted out either in different genres, emotional states, acting techniques (silence, gibberish,..), historical eras or any other ways
3. How to play? Two players act out a short scene (approximately 1 minute long), the audience defines the place, relationship, etc. Then, according to the audience's suggestion, they act out the same scene in a different way. If it's a different genre, they change some elements in the scene but still stick to the original storyline.
4. Variations: Instead of two same players acting out all the different scenes, there can be a different pair for every next scene. The previous pair can announce the next pair and genre of the scene.
5. Suggestions: The main goal of this exercise is to recognize the key events/actions of the story that mostly stay the same and at the same time play with details that change according to each new concept.

3.12 Bookworm

1. Scene: Usually for three players
2. Goal: To act out a scene in which one of the players only uses words or sentences from a chosen book and the other two players try to act as if there's nothing unusual happening. They have to carefully include the bookworm's replies into their conversation to make it seem very logical and connected to what they're talking about.
3. How to play: The scene is started by three players, one is a

bookworm, who is taking his lines from a book. The audience decides the page number from which the bookworm will read his/her replies. The audience also decides on the place/relationship/situation and then the scene begins. The bookworm can only read a word or sentence from the book - he cannot create his own sentences from the words in the book

3. Variations: The scene can also include two bookworms and act it out with three or four players.

4. Suggestions: It does not matter which book you choose, as long as the bookworm will get enough material to use. Children's books can be great fun to use, if it is not enough material on one of the pages, you can add the rule that the whole book can be the source of the lines. It is important for the bookworm not to forget that he is in the scene as well and the replies have to somehow fit into the conversation - he can also use movement, emotions, reactions - while he is choosing his next reply.

IV. Emotions and forming the character

Exploring emotions is one of the most appealing elements for young and older performers equally. Recognizing, naming and understanding of different emotional states is essential for richer stage and everyday life. With emotional investment and practicing different emotional states, improvisers build their empathy as well. With the young it is especially important to talk about emotions with examples and experiences, to name the emotions and embrace that some emotions are more pleasant than others, but all are equally important to express and explore.

We advise to use different levels of emotion portrayal to learn how to act out emotions with different energy levels (depending on what the situation needs - strong emotion can create tension and importance, but can stop the story from moving forward, so it is good to play and mix and match), portraying emotions silently, with sounds/gibberish and verbally. Emotion is also a great base for the forming of character and helps with dynamics of the scene, atmosphere of the scene, engagement of improvisers and the character they portray.

We added some games and exercises for exploration of social statuses, which reveal the relations of power among the characters. Because status relationships almost necessarily carry some kind of emotional state with them, we added them for the taste.

The important emphasis with emotions is that they are the reactions on impulses from the environment and that they help with the engagement in the stage situation. We often use tools of imagination, gestures and body positioning to explore the world of emotions from different perspective. It is very important to perform emotions with different manners - not only verbally, but also with facial expressions, gestures, the whole body, etc.

Some of the main impro skills that are promoted in emotion games are sensibility, empathy - understanding other people's perspectives, feelings, attitudes and states, taking care of each other, trust, learning about motives and relationships and statuses between and among characters, emotion in connection with the body, etc.

4.1 Gestures: Open/close; Push/embrace

1. Position: Walking exercise

2. Goal: To experience different energies that we feel, based on different body positions.
3. How to play? Everybody walks around the space. When mentor gives the instruction, e.g. 'Open!' everybody walks openly, no matter what this means to them, usually players open their bodies very naturally, have their head and look up. We encourage meeting others openly and feel how this makes us feel, what kind of emotion come with the pose. Similarly, we repeat with 'Closed!' and again test how it makes us feel if we have our body closed (looks go down, people tend to turn inwards, meeting others does not feel good). Then we add 'push'- we can first try pushing the air away and then try to push the invisible energy out of us and to push others away. Last one is 'Hug!' where we can start by hugging ourselves, later hugging just with the energy of the body and at the end hug each other.
4. Variations: Use your imagination (e.g. adding character)!
5. Suggestions: You can encourage participants to try and repeat the gesture a couple of times before they go into space and meet others with it. This exercise can be useful for basic understanding of body language and how it shapes our emotions and feelings (not only vice versa).

4.2 Sensorium / imagination exercises

1. Position: Walking exercise
2. Goal: To imagine different environmental elements that can affect the character and help players to experience different emotions and feelings, which they can use for the scenes as well.
3. How to play? Players walk around the space; the mentor guides them. It can begin e.g.: 'Imagine the sun is shining.' So, first the imagined sun is warm and pleasant. Eventually it shines harder and stronger, we try to imagine how it would feel for real if the sun would shine that intensely. Mentor asks different players what emotion they feel - a lot of times some surprising answers rise and the technique can become a tool for remembering and deeper embodiment of different emotional states. Instead of the sun, we can have other weather or some other environment conditions.
4. Variations: Use your imagination!
5. Suggestions: Players can stand still or walk, sit down and then stand up, however they feel. In general, the main idea is to explore how they feel in their bodies when they channel their thoughts and energy, when does emotion emerge and what triggers what kind of emotion.

4.3 The circle of trust

1. Position: Everybody in the circle
2. Goal: To pass one player around the circle safely, with him being as relaxed and heavy as possible.
3. How to play? Everybody stands in the circle very closely together - even touching. One player steps in the middle, closes the eyes and slowly and relaxed, but with strength and straight body posture, leans back, until player/s in the circle catch him with their hands and push him gently towards other side of the circle. After a while and if it is possible, the circle can even lift the person in the air together. Later, someone else steps into the circle.
4. Variations: One of the most widespread variations is to have one lean back and another, who stands behind, has to catch the first player and does not allow him to fall.
5. Suggestions: In trust exercises it is especially important to create the environment where we are taking care for each other. If it is possible, it works best if all participants undergo the exercise.

4.4 The circles of attention

1. Position: Everybody can start the game in whatever position they choose to
2. Goal: To learn about and to experience different energy levels and attention levels that we can have as performers.
3. How to play? Everyone finds the spot that suits them best in whatever body position, just let it be as relaxed as possible. The mentor guides the game by starting with turning attention inward - into oneself. Relaxing all parts of the body, one should be focused on his inner world. This is our first circle of attention. After a while, the mentor guides players to expand attention onto one object in vicinity or another person in vicinity, so the focus, attention and energy still remain quite small - only on oneself and the chosen object/body. Next expansion of attention is to the whole space/room and the last one is to send the attention throughout the whole world, into the sky, to the centre of the world, our attention expands everywhere.
4. Variations: Use your imagination, e.g. you can repeat it backwards or slowly mix and match (now go into second circle, fourth, etc.).

5. Suggestions: Mentor should notice body changes that happen when improvisers channel their attention and energy and might use it for the different drama situations as well. Usually, the body is slowly opening up throughout the circles of attention, the mentor can encourage change of position during the exercise - if improvisers feel that they need to move, they should. The exercise is especially useful for understanding of different atmospheres we create with our bodies and focusing energy on stage.

4.5 Bibbity bibbity bop

1. Position: Everyone in a circle, one in the middle
2. Goal: To respond to a task given by a player in the middle in given time - if you fail, you replace the one in the middle and he becomes one of the players in the circle.
3. How to play? Players in a circle, one player in the middle. This player picks a player in the circle and says/yells 'bippety-bippety-bop' at her. If he manages to get to 'bop' before she says 'bop', she becomes 'it'.

Some other elements are:

- Just say 'bop', on which others should not do anything - if the person reacts, says or does something, that person becomes 'it'.
- Say 'Anti-bop', and the person who you are pointing at should mime a penguin (hands on the side) and make a farting sound (if he is too slow, he becomes it)

Other elements are pictures, where three people are involved - the picked one and his left and right neighbor:

- Say 'Elephant' after which three players build the elephant: the middle, chosen player does the trunk (hold your nose and put your other arm through the hole of the first hand) and her neighbors do the ears. If any of the three players does not react or makes a mistake, he or she becomes it.

- Say 'Toaster': the player in the middle becomes a slice of bread, and her neighbors become the toaster, by holding their hands around the bread. The slice of bread pops up and down and makes a noise (e.g. make a crunching sound, "ding!" or says 'I'm ready!')

4. Variations: There are a lot of figures more and you can make up your own (e.g. objects, story titles, famous people/characters - e.g. the Pope - the middle one is waving as the Pope, the left and the right player go to their knees and pray, etc.). You can introduce elements gradually.
5. Suggestions: The idea of the game is to play it on the brink of our abilities. One of the main goals is to have clear pronunciation and speak

loudly. Main goals of the game are easiness, playfulness and fast reactions.

4.6 Numbers for words

1. Scene: Usually for two players
2. Goal: To play a scene where the players do not use words, but consecutive numbers instead
3. How to play? Two players on stage. Their main mission is to use numbers instead of words in the scene. The numbers follow each other consequently (A: 1,2,3,4,5 6,7,8? B: 9,10,11,12! 13!).

After the scene, audience members can be asked what was the story about in their opinion, and the last ones to explain their points of view are the players, who performed the scene.

You can ask audience for the suggestion (relationship, location, situation, random word, etc.) or you can experiment with diving in the scene without anything, with players following the impulses and reacting accordingly. Discussions after no previous preconception of what the scene is about, are especially interesting and valuable.

4. Variations: We can also use random numbers or just use numbers 1-10.
5. Suggestions: The game encourages playing with nonverbal communication, use of the body and offers insight into subtext of the scene. We encourage the use of various emotions, thinking about what is »said«, having intuitive responses and reactions, playing with voice intonation, etc.

4.7 Jumping emotion

1. Scene: Usually two players play the scene, mentor (MC) changes emotions
2. Goal: To play a scene and react accordingly when mentor introduces/says an emotion.
3. How to play? Two players up on stage. Audience suggests 10 different emotions/emotional states, which are written down on a paper and handed to mentor. Players start a scene, during which mentor yells (or uses the microphone) one of the emotions and players have to continue the scene in that emotion (and try to justify the sudden change of emotion). All 10 emotions should be yelled out at least once and can be used more than once.

4. Variations: Instead of emotion, characteristics or some other personality traits can be set (e.g. tidy, funny, drunk, etc.).

5. Suggestions: Thinking about what triggers an emotion (emotion as a response), reaction, trying to move story forward, same character in different emotional states, building the relationship, etc.

This exercise helps with the understanding the emotion as a response. Improvisers are encouraged to find triggers in the story for the new emotion that is being yelled out, and one of the goals of the scene can be to make the transitions between different emotional states as smooth and natural as possible. Mentor should remind improvisers not to forget about the plot and stage actions, as the emotional rollercoaster makes it sometimes difficult to keep up with all the aspects of the scene. The exercise can serve as a good practice for character development as well.

4.8 Status pictures

1. Position: Two players on the stage
2. Goal: To look at a picture, where and how a player stands - in high or low status - and try to have higher/lower status, depending on the rule we introduced.
3. How to play? One starts with making a pose e.g. low status pose. The other player observes and tries to make a pose that will be of lower status than the first one. We check with the audience if this was successfully put through and the lower stays on the stage, next one tries to go even lower, etc. We do the same with high status and discuss what are some signs of both status positions.
4. Variations: You can also explore stage status - if we stand in the front to the left, what kind of status do we hold, if we stand in the back, what changes, etc.
5. Suggestions: During the game mentor and the rest of the audience should talk about the body signs of high and low status, what are statuses in general, how do we recognize them, etc. It can be an introductory game into status work.

4.9 Passing the object in the circle - status game

1. Position: Everybody in a circle
2. Goal: To practice status-based interactions
3. How to play? All players stand in a circle. One starts and mimes

passing an invisible object to the neighbor, choosing whether the character of high status to pass it on, or low status. The receiver should accept the object in the opposite status that he got it (if the first passes in the high-status manner, next one receives the object in low-status manner) and then pass it on in opposite status again (if he received it in low status, the object should be passed in high status).

4. Variations: The game can be played with mixing statuses as well (so if you receive it low, you can pass it low, or do whatever you want). You can add words and context to the game.

5. Suggestions: The game can be fun especially if we make the differences between the statuses as big as possible. It can represent the great base for thinking about the relationships and dynamics between characters in the scene and life as well. The important notice is that low status characters are as important as higher status ones, if not even more (There is no king without the servant).

4.10 Status transaction

1. Scene: Two players on the stage
2. Goal: To start the scene with a clear status relationship, which should be turned around at the end of the scene (e.g. the boss ends the scene with lower status than employee).
3. How to play? Two players on stage. Audience decides on their roles and relationship, which should be a status one (so there is a difference in power between both characters), e.g. a teacher and a student (maybe say out loud statuses of both, to start clearly, so teacher with the high status and student with low status). They play a scene during which they should find ways to switch - teacher should be looking for the elements that can help them to lower their status and student finds ways to rise.
4. Variations: You can play the game vice versa and start with atypical status characters (student with higher status than teacher) and then change it to typical ones, or change more than once.
5. Suggestions: During the scene improvisers are encouraged to explore and think about gaining and losing social power; how do we make ourselves higher/lower status and how do we help others with lifting/lowering the status?

4.11 Numbers - status/emotions

1. Scene: Three to five players usually on stage
2. Goal: To play with different levels of emotions or statuses and to experience different manners of acting.
3. How to play? Three players go up on stage - usually each of them gets the paper with one number written on it (1, 2 or 3), looks at it and remembers it, but does not say it out loud. This is the level of e.g. emotions that everybody should play - so if first one gets 3, that means he portrays the emotions in an over-reacted manner, second one gets 1 - acts the emotion on a very basic level (e.g. if the emotion is fear, one can be almost brave) and the third - number 2 - is somewhere in the middle - quite a big portrayal of emotion without overreacting. At the end of the scene, audience can guess who had which number.
4. Variations: Status numbers variation can be played with up to five players - everyone gets one paper with a number between 1 and 5 on it - this is their status in the scene (5 is the highest, 1 is the lowest). Slowly, one by one players are entering the scene (audience usually suggests location) and choosing the appropriate role based on their number and try to discover what number of status others have.
5. Suggestions: When there is bigger number of improvisors on stage they have to be careful not to talk at the same time, and need to use different ways of portraying their emotion/status, for example different body positions and non-verbal communication. When played with statuses, the game can offer an insight into how people manifest power and how do we position ourselves according to others.

4.12 Emotional virus/Emotional party

1. Scene: Usually for four players
2. Goal: To play a crazy party scene where players infect and get infected with/affected by different emotions.
3. How to play? For three of the players audience chooses one emotional state for each. Player 4 is a host of a party of some sort (the reason for the party can be given by audience) and the other three are her guests. First, the player 4 is alone on stage (in any emotional state he chooses to be, he has no limitations while performing solo), preparing the party. Then one of the other players enter (the order is players choice) and 'infects' the host with her emotional state. They continue with the scene and third

player enters, infecting both that are already on stage with his emotion. The last one then infects all of the party with the last emotion and after a short while leaves the stage (by finding a reason for leaving). The party is now again in an emotional state that third player brought, and after a while he leaves the party as well. The remaining two players perform the last part in first emotion and after the last guest has left, the first player ends the scene.

4. Variations: Instead of emotions, players can bring different communication/acting techniques, genres or manners (silent acting, gibberish, singing, dancing, etc.).

5. Suggestions: We can play with different emotional levels, try to perform the emotions with our whole body and discover triggers in the scene that makes the transitions from one emotion to another as logical as possible.

4.13 Crazy date

1. Scene: Usually for four players

2. Goal: For three players to take turns in playing one character in different emotional states and for the fourth player to help to move the scene forward and to give and accept offers.

3. Four players will play two characters. Player 1 is 'ordinary', and other three players represent the second character. Members of the audience suggest three different emotions for three players. A location for the date can be chosen by the audience as well.

Player 1 and one of the 'personalities' of the second character start the scene. After a while, player 3 or player 4 yells 'Stop' or 'Freeze' (which freezes only player 2), puts himself in the same body position as his predecessor and replaces him (same as in stop/freeze game) and continues the scene in his emotional state. Player 1 does not have to freeze and can pretend he doesn't notice anything. This continues throughout the scene.

4. Variations: Instead of the date, players can perform a visit at the psychiatrist, where one player is a patient and three players play a doctor; you can choose any other occupation.

5. Suggestions: The most important focuses of the game are precision with playing the same character in different emotional states, acceptance of what has already been stated, good listening and fast responses to the actions that happen in the scene.

General guidelines on how to use theatre improvisation as a pedagogical process:

- Games/Exercises are like a lore - you can adapt, change, turn around, twirl, add, take away whatever you like and make it your own. This is the creative material intended for the creative use.
- It is strongly advised to start with games that promote the use of the body and/or happy failing as those are two of the most neglected areas in school environments.
- One of the main goals of impro - in games and scenes equally - is to help and support others, but not by making/saying/doing things for them, but encouraging, supporting and upgrading their ideas.
- Teaching improvisation is playing as well - we encourage playing with statuses, exploring and questioning the roles of teacher and student, trying to develop a sense of mutual responsibility and trying to incorporate as many ideas the young give us into our playing as possible.
- Have fun!

Improvisational theatre is joyful, happy, welcomes risks, failures and mistakes, emphasizes effort, experience, team-work, equality, spontaneous reactions, confidence, creativity, imagination. It can be a here-and-now mindfulness practice and can ignite the fire of passion for the art of theatre in general.

<http://www.young-theatre.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/YoungTheatreproject/>

Glossary

Impro process: Active practice of impro games and impro philosophy, especially for learning without knowing

Impro game: A game with specific set of rules that usually promotes one or more impro values

Warm-up game: Games used for the start of the practice to warm-up the body, the voice and the mind

Offer: It can be any inspiration that happens during performance - partner's words, movement, ideas, audience sounds, accidents - that could be accepted and included in the story of the scene

Association: First word/idea/thing that comes to person's mind when hearing/seeing/smelling/experiencing something

Suggestion: Usually from the audience, something to base the scene on (a location, a relationship, a problem, a historical era, an emotion, etc.)

Mentor: Mentor is meant as a person facilitating the impro process - sometimes the mentor also plays the role of the MC.

Side player: With a lot of games it is useful to have players on both sides, facing each other with middle of the stage empty for scenes or action - side player usually means the player that is not an active performer in the scene, but readily waits on the side to help the scene if needed or to join the game

Why it is important/useful/necessary to include impro process in your work?

- To connect
- To engage yourself and others
- To find playfulness, relaxation, openness, fun
- To build courage not only to perform, but to activate oneself and to identify and defend one's values
- To find new sources of/for inspiration
- To connect more deeply and profoundly with people and environment around you
- To find new ways to inspire the young to visit and practice theatre more
- To listen and hear voices of others (and your own) better
- To learn to commit fully
- To learn that failure is inevitable part of life and to learn how to use it as an inspiration and learning opportunity
- To discuss and embody status differences, equality and relations of power
- To give the voices to the young
- To learn to accept more
- To learn about the power of the supporting group
- To live theatre and to play life
- To be more present
- To stay alive
- To be free