



# Gentzler – Unit Plan – MadCAP Improvisation

<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>MadCAP Improvisation</b>
<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Children’s Theatre Education Programming</b>
<b>Grade level</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<b>Length of Unit</b>	<b>12 Day(s) of Instruction over 1 Year, 1 Class per Month, 24 Hours Total Instruction</b>

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

### Unit Plan Overview/Rationale

MadCAP Improv is a wild, fast-paced improvisation games workshop for young adults in grades 6-12! Join us monthly for a two-hour workshop where students will learn to trust themselves and others while embracing spontaneity and exploring the essential elements of telling the greatest unknown story. Students will explore the basic tenets of improvisation from “Yes, And” to “giving gifts” to “Name/Location/Action.” This foundational knowledge will prepare students for future forays into the world of improvisation and help them develop confidence in the power of their voice and imagination. We also focus on laughter, fun, and genuine social connection. As we often tell the students, a key element of improvisation is making soul-connecting eye contact. We do that and more, all while playing ridiculous games and exercises that create amazing stories. If your student is interested, the only thing they must do is say “Yes, And!”

### Meaning (Transfer Goals)

Enduring Understandings/Generalizations	Essential Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theatre artists acquire skills in creative thinking, which allows them to exercise flexibility when making decisions and creating worlds through imagination.</li> <li>• Theatre artists explore playfully without a preconceived plan.</li> <li>• Choosing and justifying given circumstances makes scenes more specific and successful.</li> <li>• Theatre artists work individually and as a contributing team member.</li> <li>• Theatre artists learn to trust themselves and others.</li> <li>• Art cannot be created without taking risks.</li> <li>• Theatre artists share stories about the human experience.</li> <li>• Reacting is the most important aspect of acting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important to be creative?</li> <li>• Why are strong choices essential to interpreting a drama or theatre piece?</li> <li>• How can I bring another person’s ideas to life?</li> <li>• What should I do when things do not go as intended?</li> <li>• Why is thinking beyond my first choice often beneficial?</li> <li>• What is active listening?</li> <li>• How does improvisational work foster ensemble?</li> <li>• How can students take risks and creatively express themselves through the use of improvisation?</li> <li>• How can I use theatre to better understand who I am, who I may become, and how I may affect the world?</li> <li>• How does learning in the arts help us build relationships with others?</li> </ul>

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## Knowledge & Skills Acquisition

### Learning Targets

#### Students will know...

- Improvisation Concepts:
  - Yes, And
  - Accept & Build
  - Spatial Orientation & Reasoning (SO&R)
  - OODA Loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, & Act)
- Basic 5 Act Story Structure (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution)
- Critical Story Performance Elements:
  - Name
  - Location
  - Action
- Relationship Building:
  - Value of eye contact
  - Making personal connections
  - Teamwork & Collaboration
- Listening Strategies
  - Active Listening
  - Honest Listening
  - Listen for Tag Lines
  - Listening for Story Climax
- Importance of Names: The most important word in any person's life
- How to Make Your Partner Successful
- How to speak Gibberish Language
- How to develop a Character for performance
- Divergent Thinking
- Situational Awareness Skills

#### Students will be able to...

- Explore and imagine through creative play, drama processes, and theatre experiences to discover diverse creative ideas.
- Accept blind offers to advance a scene.
- Create an improvised scene to develop story and character.
- Participate in group games and activities.
- Explain how an improvisation exercise/game relates to theatre and real life.
- Take risks.
- Use great audience etiquette when I watch others perform.
- Give constructive feedback to other performers.
- Listen and accept other's ideas.
- Share my ideas with my group.
- Create a clear beginning, middle, and end to a story.
- Add dialogue for my character that helps to move the story forward.
- Describe the difference between listening and hearing in improvisation.
- Identify the main parts of a basic story structure.
- Explain the difference between static and dynamic characters.
- Explain the 5 Act Story structure and all its parts.
- Identify the climactic moment in a story.
- Improvise a character and setting from a story.
- Engage confidently in social settings.
- Initiate improvised scenes with appropriate 5 act story structure and critical story performance elements (name, location, action).



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- Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Strategies for Information Retention
- Critically analyze improvised performances
- Value of First Choices: First is always best
- Thinking Beyond the First Choice

## Standards

- CCSS.CENTURY.21.6–8.ES.1: Essential Concept and/or Skill: Communicate and work productively with others, considering different perspectives, and cultural views to increase the quality of work.
- CCSS.CENTURY.21.6–8.ES.2: Essential Concept and/or Skill: Adapt and adjust to various roles and responsibilities in an environment of change.
- CCSS.CENTURY.21.6–8.ES.4: Essential Concept and/or Skill: Demonstrate initiative, self-direction, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking while exploring individual talents and skills necessary to be successful.
- CCSS.LITERACY.L.7.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- NCAS.TH:Cr3.1.7b: Develop effective physical and vocal traits of characters in an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work.
- NCAS.TH:Pr4.1.7b: Use various character objectives in a drama/theatre work.
- NCAS.TH:Cr2-7b: Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.
- NCAS.TH:Cr1.1.7a: Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.
- NCAS.TH:Cr1.1.7c: Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character’s inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

## Resources/Materials

- Improv Resource Sheet – 1 copy
- Whiteboard – 1
- Whiteboard Markers – at least 1
- Paper – 1 ream
- Scissors – at least 1 pair
- Writing Utensils – 1 per student
- Scripts (various) – at least 5
- Hacky Sack – at least 1
- Found Objects (e.g. keys, pens, watch) – multiple
- Construction Headphones – 4 pair
- Whistle – 1
- Bell – 1



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## References

- Halpern, C., Close, D., & Johnson, K. (1994). *Truth in comedy: The manual of improvisation*. Colorado Springs, CO: Meriwether Publishing Ltd.
- Johnstone, K. (1999). *Impro for storytellers*. New York, NY: Routledge/Theatre Arts Books.
- Masters, E.L. (1992). *Spoon river anthology*. New York, NY: Signet Classic.
- McKnight, K.S., & Scruggs, M. (2008). *The Second City guide to improv in the classroom: Using improvisation to teach skills and boost learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Napier, M. (2004). *Improvise: Scene from the inside out*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. (2014). *National Core Arts Standards*. Dover, DE: State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards*. Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School. Retrieved from <https://iowacore.gov/>
- Pollock, M. (2003). *Musical improv comedy: Creating songs in the moment*. Hollywood, CA: Masterear Publishing.
- Spolin, V. (1999). *Improvisation for the theater: A handbook of teaching and directing techniques*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

## Stage 2 – Evidence (Assessment)

*This class is UNGRADED. All assessments are therefore diagnostic/formative in nature, regardless of where they are listed in the following table.*

### Activating Knowledge Exercises (*Diagnostic Assessment*)

Students will participate in exercises that utilize existing skills in active listening, responding, collaboration, and relationship building to gain awareness of the foundational elements of improvisation. These exercises will comprise the first 15-30 minutes of each MadCAP class. The number of Activating Knowledge Exercises per class will vary depending on the specific goals and objectives of each class. Additionally, the frequency and timing of these exercises should vary to create a dynamic learning environment. During these exercises, the teacher will observe the students to assess their level of focus and participation. As their level of focus and participation increases, the students will be ready for exercises that address skill development related to improvisation.

#### Activating Knowledge Exercises (*not a comprehensive list*)

- 5 Things
- Celery
- E5
- Big Booty
- Clap
- Eye's On
- Bippity Bippity Bop
- Color Ball
- Fail Ball
- Categories
- Counting
- Kitty Kat Kareers

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- Montage
- Pfigliano
- Snap
- Spaghetti
- This is a Watch
- Whizz
- Zip Zap Zop

## Skill Development Exercises (*Formative Assessment*)

Students will participate in a series of exercises that focus on a particular skill related to the acceptance of others' ideas, storytelling, listening strategies, Spatial Orientation & Reasoning (SO&R), OODA Loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, & Act), physical expression, word association, and mime. Within these exercises, students will use collaboration and social learning to develop the associated skills. These exercises take place immediately following the Activating Knowledge Exercises and extend to the mid-point of each class session (approximately 15-30 minutes of instruction). The number of Activating Knowledge Exercises per class will vary depending upon the specific goals and objectives of each class. Additionally, the frequency and timing of these exercises should vary to create a dynamic learning environment. Due to the performative nature of these exercises, demonstration of skill development will be determined through successful participation within the exercises (appropriate individual and collaborative contribution to the stated goals and objectives). As students strengthen their individual and collaborative contributions to the stated goals and objectives, they will be ready for games that combine all skills into a single performance assessment for their peers.

### Skill Development Exercises (*not a comprehensive list*)

- 2 Sided Story
- 3 Line Scene
- Advertising Game
- Circle Word
- Didyaever?
- Jewel Thief
- Kitty Kat Kareers
- Machine
- Mind Meld
- My Mama
- One Word Story
- Prop Mime
- Questions Only
- Respect Sculptures
- Shoot for 50
- Spoon River Anthology
- What Are You Doing?
- Yes, And

## Performance Games (*Summative Assessment*)

Students will be divided into flexible grouping arrangements and assigned one or more performance games that utilize the Activating Knowledge and Skill Development learning targets. These games take place in the second half of the class session and extend to the end of the workshop (approximately 45-60 minutes of instruction). The format for this assessment allows student groups between 5-10 minutes to collaborate on how they will perform their game, adhering to its specific rules and expectations. Student groups must collaborate to clearly establish the characters, relationships, plot, and environment of their story. After the planning phase of the assessment, student groups will perform their game for the whole class. This performance includes a brief discussion before the game to establish the rules and expectations for performers and audience for that specific game along with critical information that the student audience should be listening for (character names, established location, clear plot action). This assessment also includes a brief discussion after the game to determine whether the stated rules, expectations, and critical information were appropriately met within the game.

### Performance Games (*not a comprehensive list*)



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|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1</li><li>• A Day in the Life</li><li>• Challenge / Objection</li><li>• Genres</li><li>• New Choice</li><li>• Revolving Door</li><li>• Story Story Die</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 Things</li><li>• ABC Scene</li><li>• Dr. Know-It-All</li><li>• Half-Life</li><li>• Oscar Moment / Tony Awards</li><li>• School Yard Insults</li><li>• Symphony</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15 Seconds of Fame</li><li>• Anti-Freeze</li><li>• Fairytale Countdown</li><li>• Laugh Out</li><li>• Pan Left, Pan Right</li><li>• Scripted Scene</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 911 Operator</li><li>• Blind Freeze</li><li>• Fairytale Survivor</li><li>• Murder Mystery</li><li>• QVC</li><li>• Sit Stand Lean</li></ul> |
|--|--|---|--|

## Stage 3 – Lesson Plan(s)

*Due to the episodic nature of this unit, there are no formal, individualized lesson plans. The format of each class session is established during Stage 2 – Evidence (Assessment). All “teacher talk” and opening/closing activities are dependent upon the specific exercises and games that are selected for each class session.*

## Stage 4 – Pacing Calendar

*Due to the episodic nature of this unit, there is no Pacing Calendar. Curricular concepts are repeated as necessary to accommodate the revolving nature of the class roster.*

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## Stage 5 – Instructional Materials

### Improvisation Resource Tools

RULES	PRIMARY SKILL	SECONDARY SKILL	GUIDELINES
All ideas are good	Listening	Physicality	Say Yes, and...
Don't lose information	Observation	Mime	Accept & Build
Make your partner look good	Risk	Props	Avoid Asking Questions
	Spatial Orientation and Reasoning (SOR)	Gibberish	Avoid Blocking Ideas
	Storytelling		Avoid Saying No
	Timing		Avoid Stealing
	Trust		Give Information (Gifts)
	Observe, Orient, Decide, & Act (OODA Loop)		Start with a Physical Action



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EXERCISES		GAMES		
0 - 10	Kitty Kat Kareers	[Blank] Symphony	Fairytale Showdown	Remote Control
2 Sided Story	Machine	15 Seconds of Fame	Fairytale Survivor	Restricted Speech
3 Line Scene	Mind Meld	185	Funeral Quirks	Revolving Door
5 Things	Monologues	5 Things	Genres	Rosencrantz & Guildenstern
Da Do Run Run	Montage	5-4-3-2-1	Game-O-Matic	Scenes From a Hat
Advertising Game	My Mama	911 Operator	Good, Bad & Worse Advice	School Yard Insults
Big Booty	One Word Story	A Day in the Life	Half-Life	Scripted Scene
Big Face Big Body	Pfigliano	A Word From Our Sponsor	Harold	Shakespeare
Bippity Bippity Bop	Prop Mime	ABC Scene	Irish Drinking Song	Shoot for 50
Bounce Baby	Questions Only	Anti-Freeze	Kick It	Sing It
Categories	Respect Sculptures	Armando	Laugh Out	Slideshow
Celery	Signs	Blank Slate	Mega / Deaf Replay	Soap Opera
Circle Word	Sit Stand Lean	Blind Freeze	Mousetrap	Speed Dating
Clap	Snap	Blind Line	Moving People	Spelling Bee
Color Ball	Spaghetti	Challenge / Objection	Murder Mystery	Split Screen
Counting	Spoon River Anthology	Couch	Musical Chairs	Statues
Didyaever?	Stop	Da Do Ron Ron	New Choice	Story Story Die
Do You Like Your Neighbor?	This is a Watch	Dali	News Flash	Stuck to a Cell Phone
Dukes of Hazard	Tongue Twisters	Dating Game	No "S" Game	Stuck to a Text
E5	What are you doing?	Dimestore Novel	Oscar Moment	Superheros
Eye's On	Whizz	Dimestore Musical	Pan Left, Pan Right	Tony Awards
Fail Ball	Yes, And	Dr. Know-It-All	Party Quirks	Touch to Talk
Falling	Yes, Let's	Dubbing	Postcards	Trapped
Honey, I Love You	Zip Zap Zop	Emotional Genres	Press Conference	Try That On For Size
In My Purse		Everyday Olympics	QVC	Wedding Quirks
Jewel Thief		Evil Twin	Reason To Leave	Weekend At Bernie's
		Fairytale Countdown	Rebel Without A Clue	World News



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## EXERCISES BY PRIMARY SKILL SET

Listening	Observation	Risk	S O&R	Timing	Trust
2 Sided Story	2 Sided Story	3 Line Scene	Machine	Bippity Bippity Bop	Advertising Game
3 Line Scene	Bippity Bippity Bop	Advertising Game	Prop Mime	Celery	Falling
Bippity Bippity Bop	Clap	Circle Word		Clap	
Celery	Color Ball	Montage		Dukes of Hazard	
Circle Word	Counting	Questions Only		E5	
Color Ball	E5	What are you doing?		Eye's On	
Counting	Eye's On	Yes, And...		Sit, Stand, Kneel	
Dukes of Hazard	Falling			Snap	
E5	Machine			Spoon River	
Questions Only	Montage			Whizz	
Snap	Prop Mime			Zip Zap Zop	
Spoon River	Sit, Stand, Kneel				
What are you doing?	Snap				
Whizz	Whizz				
Yes, And...					
Zip Zap Zop					

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## GAMES BY PRIMARY SKILL SET

Listening	Observation	Risk	S O&R	Timing	Trust
4 Corners	3 Things	101	3 Things	101	Dubbing
A Day in the Life	4 Corners	ABC Scene	Everyday Olympics	4 Corners	Everyday Olympics
ABC Scene	5-4-3-2-1	Blank Slate	Fairytale Countdown	5-4-3-2-1	Fairytale Countdown
Blank Slate	A Day in the Life	Conducted Sym.	Fairytale Showdown	Blank Slate	Fairytale Showdown
Blind Freeze	Blank Slate	Dubbing	Fairytale Survivor	Blind Freeze	Fairytale Survivor
Challenge	Blind Freeze	Everyday Olympics	Forward/Reverse	Challenge	New Choice
Couch	Couch	Fairytale Countdown	Murder Mystery	Conducted Sym.	Reason To Leave
Dating Game	Dating Game	Fairytale Showdown	School Yard Insults	Couch	Scripted Scene
Dubbing	Dubbing	Fairytale Survivor	Slideshow	Dubbing	Trapped
Revolving Door	Everyday Olympics	Film, TV, & Theatre		Revolving Door	
Everyday Olympics	Fairytale Countdown	Kick It		Everyday Olympics	
Fairytale Countdown	Fairytale Showdown	New Choice		Fairytale Countdown	
Fairytale Showdown	Fairytale Survivor	Postcards		Fairytale Showdown	
Fairytale Survivor	Film, TV, & Theatre	Reason To Leave		Fairytale Survivor	
Funeral Quirks	Funeral Quirks	Restricted Speech		Forward/Reverse	
Good, Bad & Worse Advice	Half-Life	Scenes From A Hat		Half-Life	
Kick It	Murder Mystery	Scripted Scene		Kick It	
Laugh Out	No "S" Game	Superheros		Laugh Out	
No "S" Game	Party Quirks	Trapped		Objection	
Objection	Scenes From A Hat	World News		Random Lines	
Party Quirks	School Yard Insults			Trapped	
Postcards	Slideshow				
Random Lines	Trapped				
Restricted Speech	Wedding Quirks				
Superheros	World News				
Trapped					
Wedding Quirks					