



Hello!

Enjoy these improv activities! Most can work with kids 7+ and many can be scaffolded for folks older – and don't forget our grownup kids! Thank you for supporting The Engaging Educator during this difficult time!

### Zip Zap Zop

**Size:** Groups 2+ **Time:** 5-15 minutes

**How to Facilitate:** Circle up. Ask everyone to raise one hand and on the count of three, have them point to someone, make eye contact, and say 'Zip'. Repeat this with the words 'Zap' and 'Zop'. The pattern is always the same: Zip, Zap, Zop, Zip, Zap, Zop.

The activity begins with the facilitator pointing to someone, making eye contact and saying 'Zip'. That person connects with anyone else and says, 'Zap' and that person connects with anyone else and says 'Zop'. The group should be encouraged to speed up. When someone makes a mistake, which can include incorrect order, hesitation or silence, the entire group places their hands on their hips, says 'AaahhhOOOgah' and does a hip thrust. The person that made the mistake starts the activity again with 'Zip'.

### What are you doing?

**Size:** Groups 2+ **Time:** 10-20 minutes

**How to Facilitate:** Begin with two people standing next to one another. Person A starts doing an activity. Person B asks, 'What are you doing?' Person A replies with any activity except what they are doing, and Person B starts doing it. Person A then asks Person B, 'What are you doing?' and Person B replies with any activity except what they are doing, and Person A starts doing it. It might look and sound like this:

**Person A:** (Dancing)

**Person B:** What are you doing?

**Person A:** Swimming a marathon.

**Person B:** (Starts swimming and saying 'splash, splash, splash')

**Person A:** What are you doing?

**Person B:** Driving with my mom. (Fakes driving, saying 'Mom, I got this!')

This goes back and forth, with people saying one thing and doing another. The game can be modified to add vocalizations, high energy, categories and/or letters . (ie: Everything said has to start with an M or everything has to somehow connect with Halloween).

### Bunny Bunny

**How To Facilitate:** Have the group stand in a circle. The facilitator starts a medium-speed beat, and the entire group follows along by tapping their hands against their thighs to the beat, saying 'ummba, ummba, ummba!' The facilitator then makes bunny ears with their hand towards themselves, twice, saying 'Bunny Bunny' then making bunny ears with their hand towards someone else in the circle, saying 'Bunny Bunny' - taking care to speak on the beat. The

person who just received the bunny ears will repeat the process, making bunny ears towards themselves twice, saying 'Bunny Bunny' and then towards someone else in the circle, passing the stimulus.

Once this is mastered, add in the next step - whenever someone is doing the 'Bunny Bunny' sequence, the people to their immediate right and left turn towards the Bunny person, wave their hands in the air, jump from foot to foot, saying 'tiki tiki tiki tiki' on the group's established beat.

### Object Freeze

**Size:** Groups 2+ **Time:** 5-15 minutes

**How to Facilitate:** Gather a selection of everyday objects. Objects can include things found in pockets and purses like change, chapstick and umbrellas, and can also include things around the room or office like a lamp, a rug or a chair. The objects are selected and placed in a central location. Then, any person in the group selects an object and makes a short statement or action using the object as something it is not, but that its shape suggests. The next person then says 'Freeze' and selects either that object or a new object and uses that object as something it is not.

For example:

**Object:** Umbrella

**Person A:** (Grabs umbrella like a sword, thrusts forward) You're not my father, Vader!

### Three Line Conversations

**Size:** Groups 2+ **Time:** 10-20 minutes

**How to Facilitate:** Have two people stand and face one another. One person makes a statement and the other responds to what they said, and then the first person responds to that response. Responses and statements can be one word or five minutes long, or anything in between. After the general flow and timing of back and forth is established with several three line conversations, the two take on the objective to establish WHO they are - their relationship with one another - and WHERE they are - their current location. This shouldn't be discussed before the conversation starts; it is created by the two on the spot. The WHO and WHERE should also be heavy-handed - anyone watching the conversation should be able to readily identify WHO they are and WHERE they are.

For example:

Person A: MOM! Where are my dishes?

Person B: You used them last time you had friends over  
- why are you standing on the kitchen sink!

Person A: I'm just looking for my things!

Person A is a child of Person B, and they are both in the kitchen.

### Viewpoints

**Size:** 2 + **Time:** 5-10 minutes

**How to Facilitate:** Start walking around the room, as you do in everyday life. This will be your 'neutral'. The facilitator of this activity will call out a series of emotions from a planned or group generated list. Some examples: Happy, Sad, Excited, Depressed, Anxious, Hopeful, Jealous, Frustrated. When the facilitator calls out that emotion, the group takes on that

emotion with their facial expression, movement through the room, and manner of speaking. Once the group is comfortable with this activity, allow them to go back to neutral, and think of an event that triggers a strong memory. Have the group pair up, call out an emotion, and ask them to tell their stories of their events with that emotion as their lens. Then, the facilitator can pick an emotion that is the opposite of the current emotion and the pairs will tell their stories with the new emotion. (Happy/ Sad/ Exhausted /Energetic)

### *Dime Store Novel*

**Size:** 2 + **Time:** 10-20 minutes

**How to Facilitate:** One person sits in the front of the room and another stands in the center of the room. The person that is seated is the 'Author' and the person that is standing is the 'Character. The Author is in charge of the Character - narrating the Character's actions, words, and emotions, as if the Author is creating a story about the Character. The Character is acting out the Author's words. After this dynamic is established, the two can trade off on control, with the Character taking the lead and the Author stepping in to add intention, additional actions and thoughts, then swapping back to the Author's control, and back and forth.

### *Blind Freeze*

**Size:** 3+ **Time:** 5-15 minutes

**How to Facilitate:**

The group stands in a line, with their back facing one person who is referred to in this example as Person A. The person at the 'end' of the line turns forward, and everyone else is 'blind' to what is happening. Person A starts doing an active activity. Examples could be dancing, having a tantrum, or skiing. They start doing their activity and either making sound effects to

what they are doing or offering dialogue. At any moment during the activity, the 'end' person can call 'freeze!' The person doing the activity has to immediately stop what they are doing, mid-movement, and the first person in the line comes to the center, takes that person's exact position and starts a completely new activity that is NOT related to the previous activity - it's simply inspired by position. For example:

Person A: (dancing) WOO! This party is amazing!

End Person: FREEZE! (Person A stops with their hands above their head, mid dance move. The front of the line person who is 'blind' takes Person A's exact position and Person A goes to the end of the line, facing the action. Everyone else is 'blind'.)

Front Person: OH NO OFFICER I DIDN'T MEAN IT! Look my hands are up!

The next moment is only inspired by the position, it is not a continuation of the previous action.

### Last Word

**Size:** 2+ **Time:** 5-10 minutes

**How to Facilitate:**

Two (or more!) people stand or sit so they are looking at one another. The group first brainstorms what they want to talk about - they can talk about anything! If the group is stuck, conversation prompts can include the weather, the way a room looks, a recent event or a favorite hobby. One person starts talking and when they are finished with their sentence (or however many sentences they have to say!) the next person starts talking. The catch? Their FIRST word has to be the LAST word of the previous sentence. For example:

Person A: Wow! It's really nice outside today.

Person B: Today has been great!

Person A: Great things happen on beautiful days!

And so on. When the group understands and attempts the flow, they can scaffold the activity to use the last LETTER of the last word to start their sentence.

### Zoom In/Zoom Out

**Size:** 2+    **Time:** 5-10 minutes

#### **How To Facilitate:**

Two or more people sit or stand so they can see each other. One person starts by thinking of a story they know well - this could be a personal story about their day, a vacation, and important moment in their life, or information they feel comfortable talking about for a short period of time. That person starts telling their story - at any moment, the other people listening to the story can say either 'Zoom In' or 'Zoom Out'. If someone says 'Zoom In', the person speaking must get more detailed about the last thing they said. Conversely, if someone says 'Zoom Out', the speaker must get less detailed about the last thing they said. For example:

Person A: I was having a really great morning...

Person B: Zoom In!

Person A: It was about 6am and I decided I was going to go for a run and have a really nice breakfast, which puts me in a good mood.

Person B: Zoom In!

Person A: My mood is really specific when I work out - I feel almost flying!

Person B: Zoom Out!

Person A: After that, I ended up getting to work...

All members of the group should take turns being the speaker.

### What If

**Size:** 3+      **Time:** 10+ minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

One person is chosen to tell the story of an important choice. This might be the choice that set them on their career path, a decision to move, go back to school, start working at a company - anything that had more than one potential choice. It can be personal, or a choice that everyone goes through.

Once the details of that choice are given, the group brainstorms the 'What If' behind the other choice and acts those possibilities out. For example, the first person may tell the story of the choice to become a lawyer or an actress, and they chose to be a lawyer. The group then acts out what would happen if she went down the path of being an actress - with all of the 'good' and 'bad' outcomes - from winning an Oscar to waitressing for life. This can be repeated with other situations and members of the group.

### Conducted Story

**Size:** 3+      **Time:** 5-10 minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

Two or more people stand next to one another in a line, with one person in front of the group as the 'Conductor'. The title of the story can be generated by the people watching the activity or the individuals participating. Poll either group for a strongly felt emotion and either a favorite holiday or animal - that is the title of the story the participants are about to tell. The activity starts when the Conductor points at one person in the line - that person starts telling the story. The moment the Conductor points at another person, the first person stops speaking - mid-sentence, mid-word, mid-sound, and that other person picks up mid-sentence, mid-word, mid-



sound, continuing the story where the previous person left off.  
For example:

Person A: It was a dark and stormy...

(Conductor moves to another person)

Person B: ...Day and lots of people were running

(Conductor moves to another person)

Person C: ...around the house looking for lots of things.

The idea is to best continue the sentence and idea - not pick up with a new sentence. You want to avoid:

Person A: It was a dark and stormy...

(Conductor moves to another person)

Person B: One day the dog went to...

This can go on for as long as the group likes.

### **Naive Expert**

**Size:** 3+    **Time:** 10-15 minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

One person is chosen to be the 'Expert' of a subject. The subject can be audience generated or Google generated. Some examples can be Bugs, Milk Products, Rocks - something the Expert is clearly NOT an expert at. The audience can ask questions to the Expert about that subject, and that Expert will answer all of the questions 'correctly'. While it is a known quantity that the Expert is not an actual expert on Bugs or Milk Products, that person not only commits to the answer in a confident manner, they also telegraph an ease and self-assuredness of a subject matter expert. This can last as long or as short as desired, and can be repeated with other Experts and subjects

## Replay

**Size:** 2+ **Time:** 10-15 minutes

### **How to Facilitate:**

Two people come to the front of the group. They create a short conversation where we clearly know who they are, where they are and what happens. It could be as simple as a mom and a daughter going to the grocery store and the store is closed, or a teacher catching a student cheating on a test. Then, the rest of the group is asked for three genres or lenses that can be placed on top of the conversation. Examples could be strongly felt emotions, kinds of movies, styles of theatre, or time periods in history. The previous conversation is then repeated by those same two people with the new lens on top. If the mom and daughter went to the grocery store and the lens is 'Jurassic Period', maybe they get eaten by a dinosaur. If the lens is Sci-Fi, maybe they beam into the store instead of walking through the door. This can be repeated with as many groups and genres as desired.

## Interpreter

**Size:** 2+ **Time:** 5-10 minutes

### **How to Facilitate:**

One person is the Guest and the other is the Interpreter. The group or facilitator asks the Guest any question - it could be advice or information. The Guest answers with only gestures and gibberish - a made up language consisting of sounds that is different for everyone. A video of Gibberish might be helpful to show if the group is getting in their heads about doing it 'right' - it truly is just a bunch of sounds strung together with the same emotion you put on words from the English language. The Interpreter has to translate the gestures and sounds from the Guest so the audience can understand what was just said. While the Interpreter will never

know exactly what the Guest is saying, the Guest can play with sound, affect, emotion and gesture to establish their point.

### *No Because, Yes But*

**Size:** 2+      **Time:** 10-15 minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

Allow the participants to get in groups of two and three. The first objective is to have a conversation using No Because. One person offers a suggestion for a trip or activity and the others response with **No, because...** and continue the conversation. After that plays out for a few minutes, the objective resets and switches to another person offering a different suggestion for a trip or activity and the others respond with **Yes, but...** and continue the conversation. After that plays out for a few minutes, the objective resets for the final time and switches to another offer of a different suggestion for a trip or activity and the others respond with **Yes, and...** and continue the conversation.

### *Fresh Choice*

**Size:** 3+      **Time:** 10+ minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

Two people start a conversation in a similar manner to a Three-Line Conversation. They can choose to be themselves or to be someone else, where they are, or a creative choice, and they focus on listening and respond to one another. After the conversation has gone on for a few moments, and at any moment, and as many times as they would like, the third person will say a person's name and the phrase "Fresh Choice". The 'called' person needs to make a NEW and different choice, and the conversation continues as if the

previous choice never happened and this 'fresh' choice occurred all along. For example:

Person A: I think it's a lovely day outside today! Let's go for a walk, Mom!

Person B: A walk sounds wonderful, can we leave now?

Person A: Sure, I'll get my coat! I love you!

Person C: Person A, Fresh Choice!

Person A: I hate you!

Person B: All I did was ask if we could leave!

### *Time Line*

**Size:** 2+      **Time:** 10-15 minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

The facilitator asks the group for one event that recently happened or is about to happen. Two or more people then act out this event as a base. Then they start offering quantities of time and how that event might trigger or were triggered by other events in the first individual's life. For example:

Event: I am quitting my job.

5 days later: (Conversation about how happy they are quitting their job)

1 year later: (Conversation showing the struggles of looking for the next thing)

10 years ago: (Conversation showing the individual wishing they could quit a job)

10 years later: (Conversation showing the person as a CEO and Founder of their own business)

This activity can be completed with a number of choices and then reflected on.

### *Doc Know It All*

**Size:** 2+      **Time:** 5-10 minutes

### How to Facilitate:

Two (or more) people face the rest of the group. A facilitator asks the group a question about anything - it could be advice or fact. The two people proceed to answer the question one word at a time as if they are experts on the subject. For example:

Question: Why is the sky blue?

Person A: The

Person B: sky

Person A: is

Person B: blue

Person A: because

Person B: it

Person A: is.

The two work together to make the answer make sense without discussing prior to answering.

### Chameleon

**Size:** 4+    **Time:** 10-15 minutes

#### How to Facilitate:

Four people stand in a line and they are assigned four different emotions. These emotions can be generated by the other participants or by a facilitator. Some sample emotions could be happy, sad, excited, exhausted, calm, nervous. The emotions should show some range, and they should all be highly felt emotions instead of an emotion like apathy. One person starts, and they begin by talking in that emotion. At any moment, another person can come on in THEIR emotion and start a conversation - the first person must 'mirror' that second person's emotion, much like a chameleon. When the third person comes on in their emotion, the other two people must mirror that THIRD emotion. Finally, when the fourth

person enters the conversation, all four people must display the emotion of the fourth person. As people leave the conversation as they came in, the emotion changes in reverse order. If Person A was sad, Person B happy, Person C excited and Person D exhausted, when Person D left, the emotion goes back to excited when Person D leaves, and so on.

### Columns

**Size:** 4+      **Time:** 5-15 minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

Two people are standing, facing one another, and two people are sitting behind them. The set up looks like this:

Seated                  Standing   Standing   Seated

The two standing people begin a conversation. At any moment during the conversation, they can extend a hand backwards to a seated person, and that seated person has to say the next line of dialogue, as if they were the standing person. Since the seated person has no idea what the standing person was going to say next, they can say whatever they would like, leaving the two standing people in the position to 'deal' with the consequences and effects of the prompted statement.

### Schoolyard Insults

**Size:** 4+      **Time:** 10 minutes

#### **How to Facilitate:**

Four people come to the front of the room. Two people leave the room, Person A and Person B. They do not need to go far, they do need to be out of earshot. The facilitator asks the other participants in the audience for three, three syllables or

more adjective, noun and verb. For example: Beautiful elephants tap dancing. The other two people, Person C and Person D, at the front of the room are writing these words down and breaking them up into small pieces that they can act out with non-verbal gesture. For example 'Beautiful' can be broken into 'Bee' 'You' 'Tea' 'Full' - all words easy to act out.