

“In a culture where approval/disapproval has become the predominant regulator of effort and position, and often the substitute for love, our personal freedoms are dissipated... With an awakening sense of self, authoritarianism drops away. There is no need for the “status” given by approval/disapproval as all (teacher as well as student) struggle for personal insights—with intuitive awareness comes certainty.

--Viola Spolin

### **Improv Theater Course Proposal 13-19 year olds**

Goal:

*Create a space and structure for students to explore improvisational theater in a supportive, group-oriented environment. I believe the best creative “work” comes out of a place of play, curiosity and enthusiasm. The work will begin in body-centered games focusing on physical interaction; the intention is to first relieve the participants of the reflective, success/goal oriented ego mechanism that asks “how am I doing?” by instead encouraging a constant physical (as opposed to intellectual) awareness of “what am I doing?” and “what’s happening?”*

*From this foundation of physically interactive attitude and non-judgmental space, we will build into outer-awareness work—awareness of spaces and of the group. This will build into partner, character and scenario work (play!)—first in non-verbal, simple story form, graduating into gibberish, interpretation, and more complicated storytelling and narrative skills. The character, object and space work interspersed with listening and awareness games will be used to facilitate the “finding” of material, to help the participants rely on their whole-body/mind listening skills to find material rather than forcing “creativity”.*

*The games and exercises and general pace of the class will be fluid, adjusted to the needs and abilities of the course participants. It is my hope that as a teacher I will be able to exemplify my ideals of present-moment focus, and rather than doggedly steer the class toward what I want them to learn and at what pace I think it should happen, patiently and consciously support the organic artistic growth that occurs naturally when people come together to create and participate in a shared, supportive space.*

*That being said, here is one possible outline of a 10-session course in improv, sessions lasting 1.5 hours:*

#### **Week One: Focus—introductions, group familiarity, sense of play**

Introductions, brief play-talk

*Games:* sound and movement

Sound and movement plus names

Give and take movement

Tag, explosion tag => slow motion freeze tag sequence

“Really Doing” meisner exercise

It’s Tuesday!

## **Week Two: Focus—Physical Involvement, Space**

*Warm-Up: Change direction, zip-zap-zop*

Exercises:

Exposure

=>sensory awareness discussion

listening—space

feeling self with self

sensory recall guided process

short body-part space walk

mirror series

## **Week Three: Focus—Body, Space, Transformations**

*Warm-up: Kitty Wants a Corner, change direction, tag sequence, murder*

Relaxation

Self with self

Space walk

Circle space transformations

Begin and end with object

*Homework: stage plot of specific Where*

## **Week Four: Focus—Body, Space, Where**

*Warm-Up: Zoom-Bafigliano, Barruga or Kitty Wants a Corner*

The Where Game

Homework Wheres into group Where game

Finding Objects, Weather, Begin and End in Where etc.

## **Week Five: Focus--Back to the Body, Physical Beginning of Character**

*Warm-Up: Sound and Movement, “yes”, Barruga*

Raft of the Medusa

Lie down, body part meditation

Body part walks

Tense muscle

Preoccupation

“Backting”

puppet-body

introduce gibberish

## **Week Six: Body, Character and Beginning Scenes**

*Warm-Up: Change Direction, or “dodge”*

Body-Part Walks 1-10

Find the voice

Character walk

=>gibberish character

=>short rotating gibberish scenes, tag in and out

## **Week Seven: Character and Storytelling & Narrative**

*Warm-up: wrong word label walk, Barruga, murder*

Character Walk

Gibberish monologue story

“ “ with interpreters

gibberish character scenes with interpreter

one word story

(discussion on narrative, yes, “failure”, “suddenly”, no wolf no narrative etc where necessary)

One word story—group

One word story—pairs

One word story acted out

Object as Hero

## **Week Eight: Listening, Emotion, Scenes, “Finding Material”**

*Warm-Up: Soundball, Barruga, freeze tag, their choice*

Music walk

Silence before, within, after

Simultaneous scenes

Exits and entrances

Mob scene

1-5, 5-1

Silent Scream

Changing Emotion

It's Tuesday Part Two, Jump Emotion

Conflict game

Costume Piece