

# AARON F. BRATEMAN

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**Unit Title:** Devising by Improvising

**Focus of the Unit:** How can we use structured improvisation to create a devised theater piece?

<b>Overarching Unit Objectives</b>	<b>Summative Assessment Strategies</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to perform a devised theater piece created using structured improvisation.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Devised Theater Performance <b>Criteria:</b> Makes strong physical choices, Makes strong vocal choices, Committed to performance, Listens and responds to scene partner <b>Documentation:</b> Tick List with Teacher Feedback (Appendix H)
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to write a devised theater piece created using structured improvisation.	<b>Performance Task:</b> Devised Theater Script <b>Criteria:</b> Character has strong point of view, Script includes specific details, Writing “shows rather than tells” <b>Documentation:</b> Tick List with Teacher Feedback (Appendix H)
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to assess structured improvisation as a playwriting tool.	<b>Performance Task:</b> Written Reflection <b>Criteria:</b> Engages in meaningful reflection, Provides evidence for conclusions <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher feedback on written reflection

## A. Relevant Learning Standards:

### Relevant New York State Standards for the Arts:

TH: Cr.3 Refine and complete artistic work.

1. Theater artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal and active participation.
  - HS1a. Use theatrical conventions to revise a devised or scripted drama or theater work.
  - HS1b. Use physical and vocal choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant.

### Relevant Common Core ELA Learning Standards:

NYS Common Core ELA 9-10<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Standards

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

## **B. Context for Learning:**

Audience: 10th grade theater class with 20 students in a specialized performing arts public high school in a large urban area. The class is a 45-minute-long playwriting class. The class runs in a double period with their acting class and sometimes lessons may extend into the next period if more time is needed. The school serves grades 9-12 and Special Education. Students audition to get into the program and take several classes a day in their desired concentration in addition to core curricular subjects. The school has 853 students. The student body is diverse--11% Asian, 13% Black, 33% Hispanic or Latinx, 36% White, and almost 6% American Indian. It should be noted, that this school contains a much higher percentage of white students than is represented in the city's school system at large. 1% of the students at the school are English Language Learners, and 19% are students with Special Needs. The student body is about 31% male and 69% female.

Known Learning Needs: Several students in the class have IEPs which include supports for redirection, focusing prompts, teacher check-ins, small group work, preferential seating, and visual support of information.

Modifications:

Learning Disability—Multi-step instructions will be broken down as needed.

Speech and Language Learning Disability—Written agenda, scaffolding, redirection, prompting, kinesthetic components to the lesson.

English-Language Learners—Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples; use physical demonstrations and visual illustrations.

Previous Knowledge: Students have completed a year and a half of theatrical training. They are experienced performers and have a working knowledge of character analysis and acting technique. They have received physical and vocal training and are expected to commit to strong physical and vocal choices in all acting work, as well as continue to work on listening and responding to their scene partner. This lesson is designed for the second semester of their playwriting class, so students will have had previous exposure to various playwriting techniques. Students recently completed a playwriting unit in which they wrote “really bad plays” and had to incorporate specific requirements into the plays, ie. the play needed to include a cow. In their freshman year, they completed a unit in improvisation, so they have a working knowledge of improv technique, as well.

**Lesson Title:** Who Am I Anyway? (Lesson 1 of 5)

**Focus Question:** How can we use physical exploration to create a character?

<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<b>Formative Assessment Strategies</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to use physical exploration to create an original character.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Character Walks <b>Criteria:</b> Makes strong physical choice, Makes strong vocal choice, Committed to exercise <b>Documentation:</b> Side Coaching, Brief Notes (Appendix A)
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to describe an original character.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Character Worksheet (Appendix B) <b>Criteria:</b> Responds to prompts with detailed answers, Responses work together to create cohesive character <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher feedback on worksheet (Appendix B)
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to examine the process of developing a character through physical exploration in relation to other playwriting techniques.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Group Discussion <b>Criteria:</b> Engages in meaningful reflection, Provides evidence for conclusions <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher feedback in discussion, Brief Notes (Appendix A)

**Related Standards:**

Relevant New York State Standards for the Arts:

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1. Theater artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal and active participation.

HS1b. Use physical and vocal choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant.

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3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:** Multi-step instructions will be broken down and instructions for Character Walks will be written on the board to serve as a reminder. Teacher will provide refocusing prompts as needed. For ELL's, key-terms will be pre-taught and images will be pulled up on Smartboard for unfamiliar locations or vocabulary. Visual demonstrations

of different types of leading will be provided by teacher, and teacher will go over Character Worksheet to make sure language is clear.

**Spatial Organization:** The space will be cleared as much as possible to create an open playing space.

**Materials Needed:** Smartboard with internet connection, Character worksheets

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Introduction (10 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher introduces the unit and goals for the unit. They lead a discussion with students about what a devised theater piece might look like and how it is created. The teacher asks students to draw upon their previous knowledge of playwriting in order to examine how devising might fit into or complicate their existing definition of the art form. The teacher then defines “structured improvisation” and leads a brief discussion about how it will be used in the unit, explaining that students will create characters to use in improvised scene work.

#### **2. Setting the Scene (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher asks students to draw on their previous playwriting knowledge to identify that well-told stories need a clear who, what, where, and why. The teacher explains that in this process students will first explore the “where” and the “who” of their piece. The teacher explains that the class will need to select a non-geographic location for their piece, ie. a pirate ship or a Starbucks. The teacher fields suggestions from the class and writes them on the board. They also pull up images from the internet to display on the Smartboard, serving as a visual representation of the suggestions. Once all suggestions have been fielded, the teacher will lead an anonymous vote to select a location. The teacher announces the winner of the vote and the winning location is used as the setting of the devised piece.

#### **3. Character Walks (20 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains how students are going to use the next exercise to create characters that will exist in the location the class has selected. The teacher asks students to draw upon their previous knowledge of acting technique and leads a group discussion about what it means to make strong physical choices, strong vocal choices, and to commit to a performance. The teacher encourages students to keep these ideas in mind as they go through the exercise.
- b. The teacher begins leading the exercise and asks students to walk around the space. They remind students to make sure they do not get stuck walking in a circle, encouraging them to use the whole space instead.
- c. The teacher instructs students to walk in neutral, meaning that the speed they are walking at should be a 5/10 if 1 is the slowest they can possibly move and 10 is the absolute fastest. The teacher instructs that students should not make any physical adjustments to their natural way of walking. The teacher explains that students will try adjusting the speed they are walking at. The teacher instructs them to try out:
  - i. A 7
  - ii. A 3
  - iii. A 1

- iv. An 8
    - v. A 10
    - vi. And a return to neutral.
  - d. The teacher instructs students to shift their attention from the speed they are walking at to a focus on what part of their body they are leading with while they walk. The teacher explains that no effort should be made to change anything; that students are simply observing. The teacher tells them that they will now experiment leading with different parts of the body as they walk. The teacher tells students to begin leading with:
    - i. Their head
    - ii. Their chest
    - iii. Their elbows
    - iv. Their stomach
    - v. Their pelvis
    - vi. Their knees
    - vii. Their feet
    - viii. Their butt
    - ix. Return to neutral
  - e. The teacher side coaches as needed, reminding students to find the extremity in their physical isolation by committing strongly to that choice. The teacher also sidecoaches, offering feedback to students who may be having trouble isolating different body parts.
  - f. The teacher instructs students to lead with a body part they have explored in the group work or one of their own choosing. The teacher encourages students to once again commit to the most extreme version of their physical choice.
  - g. As the students walk around the room leading with the body part of their choosing, the teacher encourages students to think about what kind of person might be moving around the space the way they are moving, and more specifically, what kind of person might be moving around this way in the location the group has selected. In other words, what does it feel like to move the way they are moving, and who might move like that?
  - h. The teacher encourages students to think about this character's name, age, appearance, family, relationship to the location of the piece, occupation, likes and dislikes, goals and aspirations.
  - i. As students answer these questions in their minds, the teacher encourages them to also think about what their character might sound like, reminding them to draw on previous knowledge that changing their physicality will change the way their body produces sound. The teacher then instructs them to continue walking and begin speaking a stream of consciousness in their "character's voice" (1<sup>st</sup> person) about what their character did that day.
  - j. The teacher asks students to shake out their bodies, shake off their characters, and return to neutral walking.
- 4. Group Discussion (5 Minutes)**
- a. The class sits in a circle and the teacher facilitates a discussion about the students' experience participating in the exercise. The teacher asks students to reflect on how

creating a character through this process compares with the way they have created characters in their previous playwriting experience.

**5. Character Worksheet (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher distributes the Character Worksheet to students and asks them to think a little deeper about the specifics of the character they have created. The teacher asks students for suggestions about what detailed responses to the questions on the worksheet might look like, highlighting strong suggestions.

**Homework:** Students complete the character worksheets. The teacher provides feedback on the worksheets as to which responses feel flushed out and which could use more supporting detail.

**Lesson Title:** Focus the Lens (Lesson 2 of 5)

**Focus Question:** How do we activate character choices in a script and performance?

Lesson Objectives	Formative Assessment Strategies
<p><b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to dramatize character choices.</p>	<p><b>Performance Tasks:</b> Monologue Performance  <b>Criteria:</b> Actor makes strong physical choices, Actor makes strong vocal choices, Actor is committed to performance  <b>Documentation:</b> Group discussion with teacher feedback, Brief Notes (Appendix C)</p>
<p><b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to write a monologue for an original character.</p>	<p><b>Performance Tasks:</b> Monologue Worksheet (Appendix D)  <b>Criteria:</b> Character has strong point of view, Script provides specific details about character, Writing shows rather than tells  <b>Documentation:</b> Group discussion with teacher feedback, Brief Notes (Appendix C)</p>
<p><b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to evaluate how structured improvisation helps define character choices in a script in relation to other playwriting techniques.</p>	<p><b>Performance Tasks:</b> Group Discussion  <b>Criteria:</b> Engages in meaningful reflection, Provides evidence for conclusions  <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher feedback in discussion, Brief Notes (Appendix C)</p>

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b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:** Multi-step instructions will be broken down. Teacher will provide refocusing prompts as needed. For ELL’s, key-terms will be pre-taught and images will be pulled up on Smartboard for unfamiliar topics or vocabulary. PROVE IT claims will be

provided in advance to make sure language is clear. Students will be provided extra time to write as needed.

**Spatial Organization:** The space will be cleared as much as possible to create an open playing space for the first half of the class. Students will spread out to work individually to write their monologues, and they will create an audience area with chairs to watch the monologue performances.

**Materials Needed:** Smartboard, Rant/Rave prompts, Movie prompts, PROVE IT claim papers, Monologue worksheets, Scene proposal sheets, Character worksheets (to reference)

## **Procedures**

### **1. Introduction (3 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that students are going to continue exploring the characters they created in the previous lesson by writing and performing monologues as those characters. The teacher explains that the monologues will be about something the character wants deeply and will activate the character choices students laid out in their worksheets. The teacher explains that the monologues should contain a strong point of view, specific details, and that the writing should “show versus tell”. The teacher leads a brief discussion asking students to define these criteria based on their understanding from previous playwriting experience. The teacher notes students’ initial understandings. The teacher explains that before they begin writing, they will take a deeper look at these concepts.

### **2. Rants and Raves (8 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that this first exercise will look at point of view.
- b. Students sit in a circle and the teacher gives a suggestion of a topic that students can rant or rave about. Going around the circle, students then either rant or rave about the topic in a short 10-15 second monologue. For example, the subway: “I sure hate the subway! I can’t stand being packed in a metal tube like a sardine with hundreds of strangers! And has anyone ever gotten on a subway car that doesn’t smell? Well if they have, they probably don’t have a nose!” The teacher may switch the topic as it moves around the circle by fielding a suggestion from the class. The teacher will have some pre-prepared topic suggestions available if students wish to draw from those.
- c. The teacher explains that as students ranted or raved they each took on a strong point of view. The teacher leads a brief discussion asking students to highlight a rant or rave they found particularly engaging. The teacher asks students why they found that rant or rave so interesting to watch. Inevitably, a student will attribute the speaker’s passion about the topic as a contributing factor, and the teacher highlights how a character with a strong point of view can be more engaging to an audience.
- d. The teacher asks students to think about their work from the previous lesson and assume the physicality and voice of the character they created. The teacher instructs students to activate the choices they laid out in their character worksheets and think about how their character might rant or rave about the topics they have discussed so far—in other words, how does your character feel about the topic? The teacher



provides a new topic and students go around the circle again, ranting or raving on the topic as their character.

- e. The teacher leads a brief discussion asking students how they can apply “point of view” to writing their monologues and how the improvisation affects the way they understand the concept in relation to previous playwriting experience.

### **3. Guess the Movie (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that the next exercise will focus on the importance of providing details. The teacher explains that in the exercise a student will think of a popular movie and try to get the rest of the class to guess the movie. The teacher will have some movie prompts on hand if students wish to utilize them.
- b. First, the student will explain the plot of the movie with as little detail as possible, starting with, “It’s a movie!” If no one in the class can guess the movie (which of course they won’t be able to yet) the class responds with, “We need more details!” The student then provides a slightly more detailed description, “It’s a movie about friends!” The class responds, “We need more details!” “It’s a movie about friends who get separated!” This goes on until the student provides enough detail for someone else in the class to guess the movie.
- c. After a few students have had a turn, the teacher leads a discussion about the importance of providing details. The teacher asks how students were able to provide more details (probably by expanding on something they had already laid out) and what that did for everyone’s understanding of what they were describing. The teacher asks students how they will be able to apply this idea to writing their monologues, and how the improvisation affected their understanding of the concept in relation to previous playwriting experience.

### **4. PROVE IT! (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains the concept of “showing versus telling” and explains that the class is going to do an exercise to explore the concept.
- b. Students are given a claim on a strip of paper, ie. “I am the strongest person in the world!” They read the claim out loud, and the rest of the class responds, “PROVE IT!” The student must then act out a proof of their claim, ie. They might “lift” extremely heavy weights as if they were light as a feather or balance an “elephant” on their pinky. If the student tries something but the class doesn’t feel like what they did was supportive evidence, the class can say, “Nah! We don’t believe you!” and the student will have to try a different way of proving the claim.
- c. After several students have had turns, the teacher will lead a discussion about the exercise, asking students what their experience was like watching and participating in the exercise and why showing is a more powerful tool than telling. The teacher asks students how they might translate this concept into their writing, and how the improvisation affected their understanding of the concept in relation to previous playwriting experience.

### **5. Monologue Worksheet (10 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that students will now write thirty-second to one-minute monologues for the characters they created in the previous lesson. The teacher reminds students that the monologues should be about something the character deeply desires and that students should apply the techniques they just explored—strong point of view, including details, “showing versus telling”.

- b. Students write their monologues using the Monologue Worksheets (Appendix D).

**6. Monologue Performance (10 Minutes)**

- a. Students perform the monologues they wrote, taking on the physical and vocal choices they have made for their characters. The teacher asks students to draw upon previous performance knowledge to suggest some things they should keep in mind as they perform—strong physical choices, strong vocal choices, and committing to the performance.
- b. As they watch each other’s monologues, students should take notes about which characters they think would work well in scenes with their own character. At the end of class, students will submit three scene proposals, delineating 1-2 other characters in the scene as well as a justification of why they think the characters would be in a scene together (Appendix E). The teacher will assemble different pairings before the next lesson based on these proposals.

**7. Dramaturgical Discussion (4 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher leads a discussion about the monologue performances. The teacher asks students about the work they saw and if there were moments that stood out to them as moments for the group to explore further. The teacher encourages students to explain why they felt those moments were interesting and how the skills they looked at earlier in the day influenced the shaping of those interesting moments. The teacher also asks students how the improvisations affected their understanding of the playwriting concepts discussed in relation to previous playwriting experience. Students highlight moments or characters that they would like to further explore in the scenes and rest of the piece, as the teacher records them on the board, and uses the group answers to help shape the scene combinations in addition to the personal responses.

**Lesson Title:** A Little Less Conversation... (Lesson 3 of 5)  
**Focus Question:** How do we use structured improvisation to devise a scene?

Lesson Objectives	Formative Assessment Strategies
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to use structured improvisation to create dialogue for original characters.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Structured Improvisation <b>Criteria:</b> Accepts and activates offers, Plays clear relationship with scene partner, Has clear objective <b>Documentation:</b> Side coaching, Group discussion with teacher feedback, Brief Notes (Appendix F), Teacher comments on script
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to use structured improvisation to create dialogue for original characters.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Structured Improvisation <b>Criteria:</b> Characters have clear relationship, Characters have clear objectives, Scene has dramatic action <b>Documentation:</b> Side coaching, Group discussion with teacher feedback, Brief Notes (Appendix F), Teacher comments on script
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to evaluate how structured improvisation can be used to create dialogue for original characters in relation to other playwriting techniques.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Group Discussion <b>Criteria:</b> Engages in meaningful reflection, Provides evidence for conclusions <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher feedback in discussion, Brief Notes (Appendix F)

**Related Standards:**

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1. Theater artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal and active participation.

HS1b. Use physical and vocal choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant.

Relevant Common Core ELA Learning Standards:

NYS Common Core ELA 9-10<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Standards

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:** Multi-step instructions will be broken down. Teacher will provide refocusing prompts as needed. For ELL's, key-terms will be pre-taught and What Do You Want? objectives will be provided in advance to make sure language is clear.

**Spatial Organization:** The space will be cleared as much as possible to create an open playing space for the first half of the class. Students will create an audience area with chairs to watch the Structured Improvisation performances.

**Materials Needed:** Smartboard, What Do You Want? objective prompts, Recording device

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Introduction (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that the students are going to do some structured improvisations to put together the dialogue for the devised theater piece. The teacher facilitates a brief discussion to review the definition of structured improvisation. The teacher also engages the students' previous knowledge of improvisation guidelines and asks students to suggest some rules that they should follow as they work throughout the lesson, ie. Yes anding, listening, collaboration, playing a strong base reality, establishing a clear relationship, etc.

#### **2. What Do You Want? (10 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that in the structured improvisations they will do throughout the lesson, it will be very important for the characters to pursue objectives in the scenes, just as characters would in a traditional script the students might perform. The teacher explains that in this exercise, students will practice playing objectives in an improvised scene.
- b. Two students are selected to do a scene, and each selects an objective prompt (provided by the teacher). The prompt will contain an objective like, "Get your scene partner to say that they love burritos." Keeping in mind the improv rules discussed at the beginning of the lesson, the students will then improvise a scene in which they must complete their objective before the other person does. The teacher may point out that students might not want to make their objective too obvious because if their scene partner figures out what they want, they may purposely avoid doing it.
- c. The teacher leads a discussion with the students about their experience watching and performing in the exercise and how playing an objective affected the scene. The teacher also asks students how the improvisation affected their understanding of the concept in relation to previous playwriting experience.

#### **3. Structured Improvisation (25 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher posts the scene combinations on the board that they have created based on student feedback from the previous lesson.
- b. The pairings of students improvise scenes together for the rest of the class, keeping in mind the class's selected scene location. The teacher reminds students to also incorporate the "writing" skills from their monologue work—strong point of view, including details, "showing versus telling". The teacher also asks students to use the exploration of their character's want from their monologue to create an objective for their character to use in the scene.

- c. The teacher records the audio of the scenes as the students perform. The teacher sidecoaches as needed, prompting students to explore deeper when appropriate.
- d. After each scene, the students performing and watching are asked if there is any part of the scene they would like to see expanded, or an idea that they would like to see pursued further. If so, the students performing will improvise based on the feedback they give or receive.

**4. Group Discussion (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher leads a discussion about the day's improvisations. They ask students about their experience performing in and watching the scenes, and to assess structured improvisation as a playwriting tool, contextualizing it with previous playwriting experience.

**Homework:** The teacher will post the recordings of the scenes online and students, in their scene groups, must transcribe the recordings into scripts. They may make edits and changes to the text as they see fit in order to make it more cohesive or expand on any ideas. Students will submit their scripts to the teacher for feedback. The teacher will provide suggestions about any adjustments they believe students should make.

**Lesson Title:** Writing is Rewriting (Lesson 4 of 5)

**Focus Question:** How do we use a workshop rehearsal to revise a devised theater script?

<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<b>Formative Assessment Strategies</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to revise a devised theater script through a workshop rehearsal.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Workshop Rehearsal <b>Criteria:</b> Works collaboratively with scene partner, Considers moments in script to revise <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher observation, Brief notes (Appendix G)
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to revise a devised theater script through a workshop rehearsal.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Workshop Rehearsal <b>Criteria:</b> Works collaboratively with scene partner, Considers moments in script to revise <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher observation, Brief notes (Appendix G)
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to evaluate how revising a script through a workshop rehearsal compares to other revision techniques.	<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Group Discussion <b>Criteria:</b> Engages in meaningful reflection, Provides evidence for conclusions <b>Documentation:</b> Teacher feedback in discussion, Brief Notes (Appendix G)

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**Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:** Multi-step instructions will be broken down. Teacher will provide refocusing prompts as needed. For ELL's, key-terms will be pre-taught.

**Spatial Organization:** The space will be cleared as much as possible to create an open playing space for the first half of the class. Students will create an audience area with chairs to watch each other's performances.

**Materials Needed:** Smartboard, Student scripts

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Introduction (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher explains that students will have a workshop rehearsal to revise the scripts they put together from their structured improvisations. They lead a discussion with students about what this means and to source some strategies students might employ to do this successfully as they rehearse the scene on its feet, ie. finding a way to reword some lines if they are not working. The teacher fields suggestions from students and writes them on the board.

#### **2. Workshop Rehearsal (20 Minutes)**

- a. Students work in their groups to workshop their scenes, making changes and revising their scripts based on the strategies discussed at the beginning of class. The teacher floats between groups, observing and making suggestions as needed.

#### **3. Assembly (15 Minutes)**

- a. Students watch each other's scenes. When they have watched all the scenes, they will decide as a group the order that the scenes should occur in the devised piece. The teacher will facilitate the discussion and record the order on the board. Students may make suggestions about the order, and may vote if necessary, to agree on an order.

#### **4. Conclusion (5 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher facilitates a discussion about the lesson's activities. They ask students to reflect on the experience of workshopping and revising their scene and compare that experience to the way they have revised other plays.

**Homework:** Students will create a final version of their script based on the changes they made in their workshop rehearsal.

**Lesson Title:** Curtain Up! Light the Lights! (Lesson 5 of 5)  
**Focus Question:** How do we perform a devised piece of theater?

Lesson Objectives	Summative Assessment Strategies
<p><b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to perform a devised theater piece created using structured improvisation.</p>	<p><b>Performance Tasks:</b> Devised Theater Performance  <b>Criteria:</b> Makes strong physical choices, Makes strong vocal choices, Committed to performance, Listens and responds to scene partner  <b>Documentation:</b> Tick List with Teacher Feedback (Appendix H)</p>
<p><b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to write a devised theater piece created using structured improvisation.</p>	<p><b>Performance Task:</b> Devised Theater Script  <b>Criteria:</b> Character has strong point of view, Script includes specific details, Writing “shows rather than tells”  <b>Documentation:</b> Tick List with Teacher Feedback (Appendix H)</p>
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NYS Common Core ELA 9-10<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Standards

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**Modifications Relevant to the Lesson:** Multi-step instructions will be broken down. Teacher will provide refocusing prompts as needed. For ELL’s, key-terms will be pre-taught.



**Spatial Organization:** The space will be cleared to make an open playing space.

**Materials Needed:** Smartboard, Student Scripts, Tick Lists

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Rehearsal (15 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher leads a discussion about the lesson's expectations. They ask students to draw upon their previous understanding of performance for suggestions of things to keep in mind as they rehearse and perform during the day, ie. making strong physical and vocal choices, committing to their performances, and listening and responding to their scene partners.
- b. Students rehearse the devised theater piece using the running order they created in the previous lesson and applying the discussed acting skills.

#### **2. Devised Theater Performance (20 Minutes)**

- a. Students perform their devised theater piece.

#### **3. Conclusion (10 Minutes)**

- a. The teacher leads a discussion about the unit's activities, asking students to reflect on their experience devising and performing the piece. The teacher asks students to assess how structured improvisation could be used in future playwriting and to evaluate how the experience compared with previous playwriting experiences.

**Homework:** Students will complete a two to three-page reflection about their experience devising a play through structured improvisation. In the reflection they should assess improvisation's general use as a playwriting tool, their own experience using it, and what impact this work will have on any future playwriting.

## Appendix A

<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to use physical exploration to create an original character.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to examine the process of developing a character through physical exploration in relation to other playwriting techniques.	
<b>Other Thoughts</b>	

## Appendix B

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### CHARACTER WORKSHEET

Please respond to the following prompts about your character in as much detail as possible.

1. **NAME:**
  
2. **AGE:**
  
3. **GENDER:**
  
4. **WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER LOOK LIKE? ANY DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OR CLOTHING? AN OBJECT THEY ARE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. **WHERE IS YOUR CHARACTER FROM? DID THEY ALWAYS LIVE THERE? WHAT ARE THEY DOING AT THE LOCATION OF OUR PIECE?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. **DOES YOUR CHARACTER HAVE ANY FAMILY? IF YES, WHO ARE THEY? WHAT ARE THEY LIKE? ARE THERE OTHER IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR CHARACTER'S LIFE? WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. **OCCUPATION:**

**8. WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER BELIEVE IN? WHAT DO THEY LOVE AND WHAT DO THEY HATE? WHAT ARE THEY PARTICULARLY GOOD AT AND WHAT ARE THEY PARTICULARLY BAD AT?**

**9. WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER WANT MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD? WHY DO THEY WANT THAT? WHO OR WHAT STANDS IN THEIR WAY OF GETTING IT?**

**10. WHAT ELSE SHOULD SOMEONE KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER, IF ANYTHING?**

**11. PLEASE DRAW YOUR CHARACTER BELOW:**

## Appendix C

<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to dramatize character choices.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to write a monologue for an original character.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to evaluate how structured improvisation helps define character choices in a script in relation to other playwriting techniques.	
<b>Other Thoughts</b>	

## Appendix D

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### MONOLOGUE WORKSHEET

Write a thirty-second to one-minute monologue for your character about something they deeply desire. What do they want more than anything in the world? Why? What stands in their way of getting it?

Remember to make sure the monologue has a strong point of view, includes plenty of specific details, and “shows versus tells”.

**CHARACTER NAME:**

**MONOLOGUE:**

## Appendix E

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### SCENE PROPOSALS

**YOUR CHARACTER:**

#### **SCENE PROPOSAL 1**

1. CHARACTER NAME:

2. CHARACTER NAME:

JUSTIFICATION:

#### **SCENE PROPOSAL 2**

1. CHARACTER NAME:

2. CHARACTER NAME:

JUSTIFICATION:

#### **SCENE PROPOSAL 3**

1. CHARACTER NAME:

2. CHARACTER NAME:

JUSTIFICATION:

**ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?**

## Appendix F

<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to use structured improvisation to create dialogue for original characters.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to use structured improvisation to create dialogue for original characters.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to evaluate how structured improvisation can be used to create dialogue for original characters in relation to other playwriting techniques.	
<b>Other Thoughts</b>	



## Appendix G

<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to revise a devised theater script through a workshop rehearsal.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to revise a devised theater script through a workshop rehearsal.	
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to evaluate how revising a script through a workshop rehearsal compares to other revision techniques.	
<b>Other Thoughts</b>	

**Appendix H**

**STUDENT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEVISING BY IMPROVISING TICK LIST**

**PERFORMANCE**

<b>Learning Objective</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Drama-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to perform a devised theater piece created using structured improvisation.	Makes strong physical choices		
	Makes strong vocal choices		
	Committed to performance		
	Listens and responds to scene partner		

**SCRIPT**

<b>Learning Objective</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Language-Based Objective:</b> Students will be able to write a devised theater piece created using structured improvisation.	Character has strong point of view		
	Script provides specific details about character		
	Writing “shows rather than tells”		

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_ /21

✓ + = 3 ✓ = 2 ✓ - = 1

**COMMENTS**