

About the Performance

Adventure Improv! is a hilarious improvised musical comedy that will have kids of all ages engaged, providing suggestions, and learning the value of collaboration through storytelling! With improvised Broadway-style tunes, wacky characters, and participation games, everything in this show is made up based on the interests and suggestions of the students themselves. So bring your imaginations and prepare to laugh! Our cast features some of the best comedians in Boston, who will use students' ideas to create a show that is tailor-made and unique every time.



About the Artists

The Nova Comedy Collective was started by a diverse group of comedians and entrepreneurs in 2024. At Nova we believe that comedy is for everyone. Our mission is to create live shows and other adventures in creativity that are unique, daring, and authentic. We promote belonging and community, encourage collaboration and continuous learning, and celebrate imagination, honesty, and risk-taking. At The Nova Comedy Collective, we're always laughing with you.

Program Learning Goals

1. To demonstrate the power of collaboration through improv's core principle: "yes, and".
2. To explore students' ideas with joy and laughter.
3. To empower students to express themselves through comedy that is kind, imaginative, and infinitely fun!

Essential Questions

1. Why is it important for these improvisers to support each other's ideas?
2. What do you think is challenging or scary about improvisation, and how do you think the performers overcome that?
3. What makes improv different from other kinds of performing arts that you've experienced?

Vocabulary

- **Improvisation (improv):** the form of theatre in which most or all of what is performed is unplanned or unscripted, created spontaneously by the performers
- **Comedy:** genre of dramatic works intended to be humorous or amusing by inducing laughter
- **Listening:** hearing what another person is saying with the intention of understanding what it is that they mean
- **Collaboration:** the process of two or more people working together to achieve a goal

Key Facts and Context for Students

More About Improv Comedy

Improvisation happens in many artforms including music, dance, visual arts, and theatre. In comedy, improv shows are often based around suggestions from the audience. Because improv is made up on-the-spot, improvisers practice it like a sport. They run drills and exercises so that they can be ready for whatever happens on the stage. Many famous comedians and actors began their theater careers by doing improv comedy.



“Yes, And...”

Improv comedy’s core principle is “yes, and...” This means affirming what another improviser says or does (“yes”) and adding on to it (“and”). Great collaborative stories come from supporting your teammates and contributing your own ideas and talents.

In *Adventure Improv!*, The Nova Comedy Collective lets students see their own ideas come to life onstage. Students will also get opportunities to share the spotlight and join the improvisers onstage, if they want to, while always being supported and celebrated.

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What are things that make you laugh?
- Have you ever made up a game or story on the spot? What was it like? How did you feel?
- What does it mean to laugh with someone? How does it feel for someone to laugh with you?

Pre-Performance Activity: Dr. Know-It-All

Learning Goals:

- To explore improv comedy through collaborative teamwork.
- To practice improvisation's core principle "yes, and..."

Directions:

1. Discuss improvisation and improv comedy with students. What do they already know? Do they have any favorite comedians? Have they ever tried playing an improv game?
2. Explain that they will be playing an improv game called "Dr. Know-It-All" where they will have to improvise as a team. Introduce the concept of "yes, and..." where they must accept what their teammates contribute and expand on it.
3. Have 5-7 students stand at the front of the room. They will be playing one expert named "Dr. Know-It-All". Have students in the audience ask them questions as though they are at a conference/seminar/class where people ask serious questions of experts.
4. The Dr. Know-It-All students will respond by each offering a single word at a time. Eventually one of them will decide the answer is complete and give a decisive head nod. Remind students that they must practice "yes, and..." Each person's word must make sense with the word that came before (yes). Then they must restrain their own contribution to only a single word, trusting that the person after them will listen and make it make sense too (and).
5. After all students have gotten the chance to be Dr. Know-It-All, reflect on the activity. How did it feel to be improvising with a group? Was it easier or harder than coming up with ideas alone? What funny or surprising things happened? What do they expect from The Nova Comedy Collective's performance?



Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- What are some ways you saw the performers working together on stage?
- What made you laugh? What surprised you?
- What were moments when you saw that the performers were surprised? How did they handle it?

Post-Performance Activity: Improv Storytelling

Learning Goals:

- To collaboratively produce and perform a retelling of a popular story.
- To explore character building and acting.
- To foster positive teamwork.

Directions:

1. Discuss The Nova Comedy Collective's performance. What did students notice? How were the performers using good teamwork?
2. Explain to students that they are going to work in teams to recreate a story they already know and love in 60 seconds. Create a list of stories to pick from (together or in advance), for example: *Little Red Riding Hood* or Pixar's *Frozen*.
3. In small groups, students have five minutes to quickly discuss how they will portray their story/movie. They will be performing the entire thing in just 60 seconds, so they don't have time to argue about the details! Some helpful tips:
 - Think about the characters. Who will be who? One person can play multiple characters!
 - Figure out the major plot points. There isn't time to create a whole script, so make sure everyone understands how the story begins, progresses, and ends.
 - It's ok to be silly! The goal is to keep supporting each other no matter what happens.
4. Perform the stories for the class. Emphasize positive audience skills like listening, laughing, and applauding.
5. Debrief the activity with the class. How did it feel to be improvising many parts of the story? How did the groups work together to create the retellings? How did students incorporate the improv comedy principle of "yes, and..."?



Further Resources

- [The Nova Comedy Collective Website](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Bedor, Bob: *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*, Hunter House (2004)
- Gregory, Cynde: *Childmade: Awakening Children to Creative Writing*, Station Hill Press, 2010
- Hamilton, Martha and Mitch Weiss: *Children Tell Stories: Teaching and Using Storytelling in the Classroom*, Richard C. Owen Publishers (2005)
- Spolin, Viola: *Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques*, Northwestern University Press (1999)
- Stiles, Patti: *Improvise Freely: Throw Away the Rulebook and Unleash Your Creativity*, Big Toast Entertainment (2021)

Curricular Connections

Arts Standards: Theatre

Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. (T.Cr.01)
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (T.Cr.02)

Performing

- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. (T.P.06)

Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (T.R.07)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (T.R.08)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (T.R.09)

Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (T.Co.10)
- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. (T.Co.11)

English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards

Speaking and Listening

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL.PK-12.2)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. (SL.PK-12.3)

...continued on next page

Curricular Connections, continued

English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards, continued

Language

- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. (L.PK-12.3)
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. (L.PK-12.5)

History and Social Science

PreK

- Topic 1: Civics: fairness, friendship, responsibility, and respect (HSS.Pre-K.T1)
- Topic 3: History: personal experiences and memories (HSS.Pre-K.T3)

K

- Topic 1: Civics: classroom citizenship (HSS.K.T1)
- Topic 3: History: shared traditions (HSS.K.T3)

Grade 1

- Topic 1: Civics: communities, elections, and leadership (HSS.1.T1)
- Topic 3: History: unity and diversity in the United States (HSS.1.T3)

