

COLLECTION OF THEATRE ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

Note: These games are organized by type, and within the type they are arranged loosely in a sequence that might provide optimum effectiveness and from less advanced to most advanced. Games in blue were actually used during previous GOM sessions.

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Icebreaker, Energizing Games

The Name Game:

Everyone stands in a circle and chooses a descriptive word that begins with the first letter of their name (Ex: Terrific Tara, Gorgeous Glenn, etc). Words should be positive attributes. Going around the circle, names are repeated all the way until the last person who will have to remember all the names and repeat.

Variation: Each person says, "My name is _____ and I like _____," and then they strike a pose. Everybody repeats.

The Name Game with feelings. Each person says their name while enacting a gestural or postural movement that shows others how they feel. Group members mirror back each person's movements of emotion while saying their name. This game promotes kinesthetic empathy, mutual empowerment, helps build understanding, trust and cohesion.

Purpose: active listening, memory, ice-breaking, empathy/acceptance, self-expression

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Trees and Stumps:

Everyone stands in a circle. One person begins by sending energy to another person in the circle. To send energy, one begins with hands above the head, palms touching, and then, keeping the palms together, points/directs the energy to another person and accompanies with a vocal gesture, such as "HA!" The person who receives this energy must immediately respond by saying "HA!" and simultaneously raising the arms above the head. The two people on the left and right of the receiver then say "HA" as they make a chopping motion with their

palms towards the person between them. The receiver then sends the energy to a new person in the circle, following the aforementioned pattern. When done correctly there will be a steady rhythm of the “HA” “HA” “HA” for each send, receive, and chop. If someone breaks the rhythm or mis-performs an action they are out and become a “stump” by kneeling in their place. Players should take special note of who is now directly to their left and right in order to be prepared to “chop.” The last person standing wins.

Purpose: energizing, focus, breaking the ice, using the voice

Source: Common theatre games

Commonalities

Players are divided into groups of three and go to different places in the room. Give the simple direction to find any three things they have in common, but direct them to avoid anything obvious or observable (“We are all wearing sneakers”). Ask each trio to appoint a spokesperson who will introduce the group and the commonalities. After all groups present, ask if anyone heard from another group something they also have in common.

Variation: Ask, “What three strengths do you share?”

Variation: Ask, “What three things make you angry?”

Purpose: group communication, discovery of commonalities

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Spectogram

Players position themselves along a line according to how they feel about a statement made. For example, ask, “How many people like chocolate ice cream?” Participants go to the area of the line that best describes how they feel—one end is designated as “likes most” and the other is designated as “likes least.” Intersperse more meaningful questions in to the game, such as “how many people think others respect your opinions?” or “how many people think they are good at resolving conflicts?” Discuss personal discoveries.

Purpose: group introductions, self-knowledge

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

How Are You Feeling

One person does a nonverbal expression of how they are feeling, and everyone then does it several times. Others try to guess what the feeling is. Repeat now that everybody understands the feeling, then move on.

Purpose: connect non-verbal actions and feelings, physicality, empathy

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Pass the Sound/Object

Players stand in a circle. The director whispers an object to 1 person (sand, ice, puppies, etc). This person then hands the object to someone else, shows it, does something with it, etc.

Purpose: focus, group visualization

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Juggling

The group tries to juggle 3 balls—not individually, as a whole group. Begin with one ball. One player passes the ball to anyone in the circle, saying their name as she passes, then raising her hand. This player then passes to someone not beside her and without their hand up...until the last person gets the ball, and then it goes back to the starting position. Introduce a second ball for round 2, and then introduce the 3rd ball. Start slowly!

Purpose: teamwork, communication, focus, concentration, impulse control

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Three Changes

Players stand in two rows facing each other. Each person observes the person standing opposite her, noting the particulars of what the person is wearing. Both rows then turn their backs and everyone makes three changes to their appearance (moving a ring, unbuttoning a button, etc.). Players then face each other again and try to identify the changes.

Purpose: awareness, introductory

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

People to People

One person stands in the middle of the circle, and the people in the circle work in pairs. The middle person calls out “foot-to-foot” or “knee-to-knee” etc, and the pairs do these actions. When “people-to-people” is called, everyone finds a new partner, and the middle person tries to pair up as well. The person without a partner is the new caller.

Purpose: ice-breaker, physical contact, non-competitive

Source: Unknown source, adapted

Sound and Movement

Players stand in a circle. One person goes to another player while performing a sound a movement. The receiving person then takes on the sound and movement, moves to the center of the circle, and then allows the sound and movement to change into something new. They then take this sound and movement to a new person in the circle, and so forth.

Purpose: Freeing the body, kinesthetic empathy, group cohesion, address resistance

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Explosion Tag

Traditional tag is played, and then after a few minutes a new direction is given that when tagged, a player must “explode.” There is no set way to explode.

Purpose: energizing, spontaneity, warm-up

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Opposites:

Players are in two lines. The lines walk towards each other, acting out their specific word. When they get to the middle, they switch to the opposite and keep walking. Continuous movement. Opposites can be emotions (angry/peaceful), types of people (rich/poor, baby/old), elements of nature (fire/water), types of animals (turtle/cheetah), careers, etc.

Purpose: representation, abstract thinking

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Machines

Start in a circle or line. The group chooses a machine theme or the director gives the prompt (cheese-making machine, playwrighting machine, or more abstract—a “love machine,” a “greed machine,” etc.). One at a time, players go into the playing space and perform a repetitive physical gesture and vocal gesture based on the theme. Other players then add in, one at a time, with a new sound and gesture, until everyone is part of the machine.

Variation: Whoever began the machine can initiate changes in tempo and everyone must follow—the machine can get faster and louder, then slower and quieter until it breaks down and dies.

Purpose: physicalization, vocal warm-up, group cohesion, energizing

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer, common theatre game

Stylized Tag

One player is “it.” She begins a movement and sound. Everyone repeats the sound and movement, moving away (but not running!) from the “it” player, who tries to tag someone. When someone is tagged, she quickly initiates a new movement and sound, which are imitated by the rest of the group. There should be no pause between change in movement.

Purpose: breaking the ice, physicalization

Source: *Let's Improvise: Becoming Creative, Expressive & Spontaneous Through Drama* by Milton E. Polsky

Improvisational Games

Problem-Solving Scenes

Players are divided into teams of 5 for the following situations. Players brainstorm possibilities and improvise their solution with dialogue and perform for the rest of the players.

Problem 1: Players are atop a mountain in a cabin. They hear on the radio that an avalanche is approaching. They have one toboggan that only seats four people. They must find a solution to the dilemma that is agreeable to all.

Problem 2: There is only one person in the scene who speaks English. The other players are of a different culture and can only speak in gibberish. These people ask directions to get to an important place (they agree on a place). The English-speaking person must try to understand where they want to go and give them directions.

Problem 3: Create a 3x3 board or mark it on the floor. Five people are on this "raft" and must stand on board and balance as you float atop shark-infested waters.

Purpose: cooperation, creative problem-solving

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Freeze and Justify:

Two players move around dynamically in space. The director calls out freeze and asks them to justify why they are in that position. Player number one begins to enact an improvisational scenario based on the position that both players are frozen into. Group members watching can then call freeze, and take the place of one of the players and start a new scene.

Purpose: improvisational skills, physicalization

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Honey Walk:

Actors walk in place. The audience calls out different things to walk through: snow, ice, mud, jell-o, honey, cotton candy, etc...

Purpose: improvisational skills, visualization

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Flock of Seagulls:

One actor leads and the others follow. The problem is that each of the other actors has a sort of problem: a foot stuck to the floor, can't put her arms down, hands stuck to head, keeps falling asleep, etc. (create your own).

Purpose: improvisational skills

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Director's Chair/Show Me -

Players stand in line. One person directs the next player about to go on stage and calls out different characters, situations, or emotions to see, saying things such as "show me a zombie, show me a preacher or show me a cheer leader.

Variation (Family): A group of players are on stage. Director calls out show me a happy family, a confused family, an irritated family, etc.

Purpose: improvisation, playing out real-life circumstances

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Object Story Telling

Fill small paper bags with objects you would find around the house (paperclips, spoon, battery, etc.). Each person takes a bag and goes around the circle and tells a story about what's in the bag.

Purpose: improvisation, group listening

Source: Melanie Heffner

Lines from Pockets:

The audience writes lines for actors to say, which are randomly kept in actor's pockets. During a scene they interject these lines.

Purpose: improvisational skills, spontaneity

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Characters from a Hat

Players pick character traits out of a hat and a movement quality out of a hat. Combine them, perform them.

Variation: Pull a character with traits listed beneath and perform with gestures and voice and movement through space. Choose a name and introduce yourself as you pass others, strike up conversations.

Purpose: improvisation, Physical exploration

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Party

The director whispers to party guests who they are, or for older groups let them come up with their own ideas. (Ex: Someone who grunts like a pig when they hear "hello," a cowboy, a gorilla, a preacher who wants to save everyone's soul, an opera singer, someone who coughs whenever a question is asked, etc.). 1 student hosts the party. Choose the stage setup (where is the sofa, snack area, etc). Host greets everyone and once everyone is being served tries to guess who they are (Ex: Can I get you some more food? How are you? Ah, so you are an _____...)

Purpose: improvisational skills, representation, group interaction

Source: Adapted from *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Guess Who's Guilty

The group is divided in half. Each subgroup sits in a row facing the other subgroup. One group is given the role of police detectives who must observe the other group members. The setting is a waiting area of a police station and the detectives are told that one of the people is guilty of a crime and the others are innocent. The other subgroup is first observed through a one-way mirror. The detectives are given a limited time to observe nonverbal language and facial expressions before making their guesses. The task of those being observed is to fully concentrate on the situation they are assigned (for example, someone detained because of smuggling drugs on a bus on which they were all passengers). The guilty person has been determined by picking a slip of paper marked with an x. There is no need to try to behave in a certain way, just to imagine themselves in a particular role. After a given time, the detectives begin their accusations. After all detectives report their guesses, the guilty person slowly stands up to turn herself in. Tension may be prolonged by different suspects shifting or fake-rising. Reverse roles.

Variation: Include a period for questioning/verbal improvisation.

Purpose: imagination, awareness, non-verbal communication

Source: *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Alphabet Game:

Actors act out a scene, but they must start each sentence with the letter of the alphabet. If an actor gets a letter wrong, audience yells "Sleep!" and remaining actors continue.

Purpose: improvisational skills

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Make me Laugh:

One person sits in the chair, and tries to keep a stern or peaceful expression that does not change. 2 people are on either side of the person in the chair and their role is to try to get the person in the chair to laugh. They are not allowed to touch the person in the chair. They have 30 seconds to get the person in the chair to laugh.

Purpose: improvisational skills, focus, problem-solving

Fairy Tale in a Minute:

Actors pick a fairy tale or get suggestions from audience and act out the story in one minute. Then they act the same scene in 30 seconds, and then 10 seconds.

Purpose: improvisational skills, problem-solving

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Create a Skit based off 3 lines

You choose any 3 lines. Thinking of beginning, middle, end is helpful.

Purpose: improvisational skills, preparation for creating performance

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Create a monologue based off of a poem:

Purpose: improvisational skills, preparation for dialogue

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Transformation of Relation

Two players begin with a relationship, such as a doctor examining a patient, and while playing, allow the Who to transform into new relationships, one after the other. Players do not “initiate” change but rather *allow* it to happen. Players may become animals, plants, objects, machines, and enter any space and time.

Purpose: movement, constant interaction, character relationships

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Group Dynamics

Pass the Ball

Everyone stands in a circle. Players pass a mimed ball to others, one ball at a time. The ball's weight can change (extremely heavy or extremely light), and the ball's size can change (big or small), in any combination of weight and size. Actors must show the ball's characteristics in the way they pass it.

Purpose: visualization, group interaction

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Knots

Everyone stands in a circle. Everyone puts their hands in the center and joins hands with another person. The rules are that you cannot connect hands with the person beside you and you cannot connect both hands with the same person. Then the group untangles the knot WITHOUT disconnecting the hands. They may need to go over, under, around others.

Purpose: cooperation, focus, problem solving

Source: Unknown source, adapted

Inside Out

Use a large rope tied in a circle or other type of material in the shape of a circle. The group begins inside the circle with backs towards the center. They elevate the rope with only their feet, then as a group they reposition themselves so they are outside of the circle. Rules: the rope may never touch the ground—the only thing that can touch the ground is the participant's feet, and participants must stay in contact with the rope throughout the activity.

Variation: Reverse—begin outside and end inside

Variation: No talking

Variation: Half the participants are blindfolded.

Purpose: teamwork, group problem-solving

Source: Adapted from Group Loop Activity Guide by Tom Heck

Group Stop:

Everyone quietly mills about the room. One person can make the choice to unexpectedly freeze. As soon as someone notices that a person has frozen, they freeze as well. The effect should be that eventually everyone freezes. Once everyone is frozen, the group mills about again.

Variation: Walking around the space, one random person shouts, "falling," and the rest of the group gathers to catch the person. Once the group gets good at this, the person who shouts "falling" should actually begin to fall, raising the stakes for the rest of the group.

Purpose: group cohesion, synergy, focus, awareness, trust

Source: Adapted from Pig Iron Theatre Company exercises

Group Detective

One person or a group of people leave the room. The group remaining picks a leader. Movement of any sort can ensue. As the movement goes on, the group outside comes in and tries to guess who the leader is. Once they identify, ask them to describe their strategy.

Purpose: handling group energy, focus, group cohesion

Source: Adapted from various theatre games

Who am I:

A note card is put on each member's back. On the card is written a type of character—an animal or a person (for example: Princess, Fire Fighter, Monster, Monkey, etc). The students with cards on their backs go around to the others and turn around to show them the card. Without saying the word, the others act out with sounds, phrases, and gestures, to describe the character. The student guesses at the end what their card says based on the others' clues.

Purpose: group interaction, physical communication

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Group Motion

Players are divided in to groups of 8 or 10. They link arms in a circle and follow directions without talking to one another. With arms linked, they are asked to establish a common sound and movement with both feet on floor. When accomplished, establish another sound and movement with one foot off the floor. Then repeat the exercise but moving forward and backward. Discuss afterwards the group process: Did one person start the motion or did it occur spontaneously in the group? Was everyone comfortable with the sound and motion? Did they want to do something else? How did it feel to cooperate with the whole group?

Purpose: synergy, group cohesion

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Group Mood

One person leaves the room. The group then decides on a certain mood, emotion, attitude, or behavior to enact. The chosen player then re-enters and observes the group until she can identify the mood they are portraying.

Variation: The guesser can call out commands such as, "walk" or "pretend to eat" and observe how the players accomplish the tasks.

Purpose: cooperation, embodying a mood, self-observation

Source: *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Numbers (or 21 Count)

Players stand in a circle—anywhere from 4 people to the whole group. Players try to count to 21 consecutively, each saying a number but not in any order or by receiving direction from any group member. Players call out numbers when they choose. If any 2 players call out the same number simultaneously, they start over from 1.

Variation: Go past 21 and see how high the group can go!

Purpose: awareness, deep listening, group focus

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Give and Take

Players get in to teams of four and subdivide into teams of 2. Each team of 2 is at their own table and pursues a separate conversation. While continuing the conversation, both sub-teams must hear the other team so as to know when to give or take.

Part 1: Director calls "Table 1" and "Table 2" until how to play becomes clear to both teams. The sub-teams begin by conversing at the same time. When Table 1 is called, team 2 fades out and gives focus to Team 1. Fading out does not mean freeze, but rather to hold the action and converse silently and to be prepared to continue when it is time to take focus.

Part 2: When mutual giving of focus to opposite sub-team is understood, players give focus back and forth without being side-coached.

Part 3: As above, sub-teams try to TAKE focus from one another.

Part 4: Sub-teams GIVE focus.

Part 5: Focus is given and taken without side coaching.

Purpose: active listening, synergy, readiness

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Personal Space and Shared Space

1. Players begin exploring their own space, their own kinesphere
2. Move in to connection and move together
3. Move Apart, somehow staying in contact (could be a rhythm, eye contact, rushing past each other, etc.)
4. Come back together
5. Make group sculpture based on a theme

Purpose: reconciling the individual with the greater whole, non-verbal communication

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Add A Part

Eight to ten players a team. The first player uses or makes contact with part of a larger object that only she has in mind and then leaves the playing space. One by one, players use or contact other parts of the whole object until the whole thing is left in space. (For example, one person sits and uses a steering wheel, the second wipes the windshield, the third opens the car door, etc.).

Purpose: group visualization, seeing the individual in the whole

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Trust and Partner Work

Trust Walks

Partners take turns leading each other around the room. The person being led keeps their eyes closed and body relaxed. Try different speeds of walking and variations in floor patterns.

Purpose: trust, awareness

Source: common theatre exercise

Stand Up/Balancing

Players work in partners and sit back-to-back, knees bent, arms linked at the elbow. They try to stand up, keeping arms linked and backs together. Keep the exercise nonverbal. Change partners.

Part 2: Players stand face-to-face, arm's length apart (one partner's hands touches the shoulders of the other). Players hold hands and then bring feet forward so they stand toe-to-toe. Then they straighten arms and lean back while maintaining the point of balance. The bodies should be relaxed. Once achieved, players can move up and down and side to side, maintaining balance.

Purpose: cooperation, trust

Source: Adapted from *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah amongst many other sources

Hand Gestures

One person sits and places his arms behind his chair. He will be the speaker in an improvisational scene. Another person crouches behind the chair and juts his arms out between the speaker's arms and ribs and will act as the hands of the speaker. The speaker is then interviewed by the group or another actor as the person behind the chair gesticulates.

Purpose: empathy, synergy, improvisation

Source: *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Pilot to Tower or Mine Field

Two players stand at either end of the room. One player is the tower who gives directions and must stay in one place. The Pilot is blindfolded and spun around 3 times. The room has been strewn with obstacles. The Tower gives directions such as "take a baby step forward, stand still, etc," but the Pilot cannot ask questions. The Tower must lead the Pilot across the room—if the Pilot touches an obstacle there is a crash, and another Pilot and Tower are selected.

Variation: This can be done with partners in rows

Purpose: cooperation, trust, clear communication

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Mirrors

Actor's A and B are paired up and stand across from each other. Actor A does simple movement, Actor B mirrors. Switch. The movements can gradually become more expansive with the body and can travel around the room. Eventually Actor's A and B can "share the lead," in which they mirror each other in a free flow.

Variation: With a large group, it can be fun to create a line down the center of the room, have partner's stand on either side of the line, and allow for interaction amongst pairs. One person can stand out at a time and view the moving palindrome created by looking down the center of the line.

Variation: Can mirror simple every day activities such as, brushing your teeth, getting dressed, putting on make up, doing hair. Tying shoes, etc.

Variation: The exercise can also be done with music, or a variety of music selections to show changes of mood.

Purpose: inhabiting a new body, trust, mutual empowerment, kinesthetic empathy, synchrony, free movement, concentration

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Guess Who

One person sits in the center of the circle and is blindfolded. This person holds out her hand and a volunteer places her hand in the guesser's hand. The guesser attempts to distinguish whose hand she is holding. Remind participants to stay silent in order to not give away their identity. Allow the guesser three guesses and a few turns. Then switch guessers.

Variation: Work in pairs. Partners feel each other's hands for a minute or so. Then everyone closes their eyes and walks VERY SLOWLY around the room (the facilitator must make sure everyone is safe), searching for their partner by bumping gently into different bodies, finding the hands, and guessing whether or not these are their partner's hands. If they believe this is their partner, they may open their eyes and check—if they are wrong, they simply close their eyes and continue. Once partners are successfully mutually discovered they step out of the game.

Purpose: physical contact, intimacy, group trust

Source: Unknown source, adapted

Circle of Trust

The group makes five or six smaller circles, with players standing shoulder to shoulder and with feet close together. A player volunteers to start and steps into the middle of the circle, closes the eyes, and falls backward. The rest of the group catches the player and gently places her upright. The player in the center should relax every muscle.

Variation: After the person is comfortable falling backwards, allow the group to transfer the weight whichever direction they want. The person in the middle should give all their weight to the group.

Purpose: group trust and support

Source: Adapted from *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Voice and Sound

Extended Sound

Partners sit a distance apart from each other.

1. All players send a sound to all other players
2. Each player sends sounds to fellow players
3. Give and take sending a sound to fellow players

Work on keeping the sound between you in space, allowing the sound to land, extending the sound and speeding up the sound.

Purpose: exploration of voice as occupying space, vocal focus

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Sound Effects

Teams of players agree on a Where and gather around a live microphone. Using sound as part of a whole, players become the chosen environment (railroad station, jungle, etc.). Because there is no action, players may stand out of sight of audience or audience may close their eyes. A tape recording may help in evaluation and awareness of how the individual fits in with the whole.

Purpose: sound exploration, environment creation, group work

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Mirroring Sound

Actors work in pairs facing each other. One player initiates and makes sounds (loud or soft, humming, shouting—variety is desirable). The other actor reflects and mirrors the sounds. When “Change” is called, roles are reversed with no stop in the flow of sounds.

Variation: Try mirroring with speech. Actors agree on a topic of conversation. The initiator begins speaking, and the reflector mirrors the words and tries to speak the words at the exact same time. Switch. After a time, “Change” will no longer be called and actors share the lead and “follow the follower,” speaking simultaneously without conscious effort.

Purpose: communication, freeing the voice, synergy

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Singing Dialogue

2+ players agree on where, who, what. All dialogue is sung (singing must be addressed to the other player). “Good singing” is not necessary—this is an exercise in the extension of sound, to create a flow of sound between players.

Purpose: vocal exploration, vocal intuition, breaking speech patterns

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Dubbing

Two or three players choose other players to be their voices. All agree on Where, Who, and What. The voices gather around a microphone and the body players enact the where, who, and what. The voice players reflect onstage activity through dialogue. The body players move their lips in silent gibberish. Groups should follow the follower in voice and action. Have groups eventually switch places. At first, players will become one body/one voice only in flashes, but when that connection is made a burst of power rises and unites them in true relation.

Purpose: break speech patterns, explore new possibilities, synergy

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Toning

Begin breathing without sound, inhaling into the lower abdomen. Then add sound to breath, making the voice fully audible. Humming is a good way to begin the toning as a warm up. Be creative with physical movements, feelings, postures, and images to assist you in supporting and freeing the tone and the resonance. Hold notes for as long as is comfortable. Vowels may run together or be separate. Initial and final consonants may be added if or as they come to you. Toning may cover the whole range of the voice or stay in one area. It is not necessary to tone loudly—experiment. Do a siren, softly on an “ng,” at the beginning of the session, moving freely up and down your range. Later, try it with vowel sounds. During the toning session, keep in mind that there are 2 parts: sounding and listening. When you are not sounding you are listening to your body, feelings, thoughts, other sounds, and silence. Alternate toning and movement with stillness and open attention.

Purpose: voice exploration, physical presence, non-judgmental expression, internal healing, introspection

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer, common vocal technique

Non-verbal Communication, Listening

Who's Knocking?

One player remains out of sight and knocks on a door. The player should communicate who is knocking, for what reason, where, time of day, weather, etc. (Ex: a policeman at night, messenger from the king, young child in a closet). Then, the audience guesses. It will be very hard to guess correctly. Eventually the knocker reveals the circumstances. Then, the knocker tries again, and this time, the audience knows the circumstances and will observe the communication more clearly. Take notes on how the knocker communicated well.

Purpose: non-verbal communication, active listening

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Blindfolded Person

One person is blindfolded and sits in a chair at the end of the space. A group of people line up and begin to walk very quietly toward the blindfolded person. The aim is to touch her or cross the line where she is seated before she hears them. The blindfolded person points to any person who she hears move—if her finger misses them, they keep going; if she aims right at them, then the person must go back to the beginning.

Purpose: deep listening, concentration, sensory awareness and development

Source: Unknown source, adapted

Silent Scream

Seated, players scream without making a sound. Only once they are responding as physically and muscularly as for a vocal scream, allow them to scream out loud—the sound will be deafening.

Purpose: full-body communication of emotion

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Silent Tension

Two players agree on where, who, what. Tension between them is so strong that they are unable to speak; there is to be no dialogue during the event/scene.

Circumstances must be communicated through the silence. Examples: sweethearts who just broke their engagement, elderly couple hearing a burglar downstairs.

Note that the scenes often end in a scream or laugh, or some sound, but do not tell this to students! If they solve the problem, it will come spontaneously.

Purpose: full-body expression, clarifying a story

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Deaf Audience

Two or more players agree on Who, Where, and What. Audience members plug their ears while watching the scene. Players go through the scene normally, using dialogue and action, but realizing the increased need for physical communication.

Purpose: full-body communication

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Hands Alone

In teams of two, players agree on who, what, and where. Speech cannot be used in the scene. Only the hands and forearms should be seen (a curtained table may be needed, perhaps a puppet-like stage). The players focus on articulating with their fingers and hands. Discuss afterwards if the relationship was communicated.

Variation: Make only the legs and feet visible during a scene (non-verbal). Focus on fully communicating the circumstances and action.

Purpose: non-verbal communication, full-body expression

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Space and Physicalization

Twirl your Thumbs, Thighs, and Toes

Stand in place and twirl your thumbs, then add the circular motion of the fingers, then the wrists, arms, shoulders, chest, pelvis, all the way down to your toes. By this time your whole body should be in motion. Move around the room, eliminating in reverse order, concentrating on isolating different limbs. Stand in place, relax, shake yourself like a wet dog.

Purpose: whole-body warm-up, exploring the body

Source: *Let's Improvise: Becoming Creative, Expressive & Spontaneous Through Drama* by Milton E. Polsky

Moving in Space

Players walk through space without bumping in to each other, constantly moving so that no part of the space is empty. Begin slowly. Focusing on others' eyes helps to not bump in to them. Move faster and faster; make sure there are no empty spaces in the room.

Director can say "freeze" or "jump" or "change direction" during this movement.

Variation: This game can be used as a base to explore imaginary landscapes, weather conditions, and emotional states, colors, etc.

Variation: different movement qualities such as free or bound flow, quick or sustained movement, direct or indirect movements, strong or light movements using imagery to evoke this, such as glide like an eagle, dart like a rabbit running from a fox, wind like a river, twist water out of a thick towel, push a piano, lift 300 lb bar bell, float like a cloud, march like soldiers on a grid – only square corners, try to ditch someone who is following you on a busy city street, run to catch a bus, punch out of the water like a whale, slash like lightening, etc...

Variation: director can guide group to explore spoke like or arc like shaping movements, in near, mid and far reach on various levels, low, middle and high... and have them freeze creating different sculptures. Have half the sculptures remain frozen, while the rest of the group members walk around the museum.

Final variation: Director can add music, and have the group explore the "landscape" of the music, climate, time of day, smells, plants, animals, elements of nature, bodies of water

Purpose: spatial awareness, group cohesion, movement range expansion, imaginative self expression

Source: Adapted from Spolin exercises

No Motion

Players walk around the room focusing on "no motion." Direct the players to "do nothing—let your body walk around the room, let your sight go out into the whole room and see all the objects around you—see your fellow players in no motion."

Purpose: releasing anxiety, calm and awareness, physical relaxation

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Space Walks

Players walk around and investigate space as an unknown substance. The director is a side-coach. Director guides with phrases such as, "Feel the space around you. Investigate it as some unknown substance. Feel the space against your back, neck, inside your mouth, along the outside of your body, feel your body shape as you move through space. Let the space feel you." Allow time between phrases. More phrases: "As you walk, go inside your body. Feel your shoulders, up and down the spine. Feel your inside from the inside. Observe. If you didn't hang on to yourself you would fall in to a thousand pieces. Now let the space support you." (Can use **Moving in Space** structure to implement this space exploration)

Purpose: freeing the mind and body, spatial awareness

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Different Walks

Players walk around the room and secretly pick somebody to follow. Players must try to embody the walk of this person in all aspects.

Variation: Pause and have one person demonstrate the walk. Group tries to guess who they were embodying.

Variation: Players work in pairs. Partner B follows Partner A, embodying the walk. Then Partner A steps out and observes as Partner B continues the embodiment. Switch roles. Discuss how it is to embody another person and how it is to observe somebody embodying you.

Purpose: expansion of physicalization, empathy, awareness of own body in space

Source: common theatre exercise

Sound and Movement

Players stand in a circle. One person goes to another player while performing a sound a movement. The receiving person then takes on the sound and movement, moves to the center of the circle, and then allows the sound and movement to change into something new. They then take this sound and movement to a new person in the circle, and so forth.

Purpose: Freeing the body, kinesthetic empathy, group cohesion, address resistance

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Sculptures:

Players work in partners to sculpt each other into shapes. The clay “decides what it is.” Or, everyone moves and then freezes to make a sculpture garden. The director asks what they think they are—animal, vegetable, or mineral—and how would they move like that?

Variation: Use a picture as the source for a sculpture garden. Half the group moves, and when “freeze” is called, the other half places them into a sculpture garden and describes what scene they see (windswept trees, trash heap, pack of wolves, etc...).

Variation: Once one person shows the sound and movement and rhythm of their sculpture, everyone mirrors. Ask where sound comes from in body—feel where it vibrates. Explore the force, time, levels, body parts, bound/free-flowing aspects of the moving sculpture.

Purpose: representation, abstract thinking, exploring physicality

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer from many common theatre exercises

Bathtub

Players push their “bathtub” into the center of the space and paint it with different parts of their body. Then they get in and splash around. They step out of the tub but this time move with only 1 part of the body, any part they choose. Then they get in and out of the tub to switch body parts. Discuss what was discovered about different parts of the body.

Purpose: awareness of physicality

Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Movement Story

Divide the group into smaller groups of two or three. Participants choose a familiar theme such as a story, fairy tale, historic event, etc. The groups decide how to convey the theme/story in three separate sculptures created by using all participants. Give 15 minutes to create the movement story. Each group performs its story while others watch and guess the theme. The group may need to perform several times for the audience. If time permits, switch groups and change themes.

Purpose: non-verbal communication, physicalizing a story, teamwork

Source: Unknown source, adapted

Paper Balancing

Each person receives a small piece of paper or index card. Participants try to balance the paper on any part of their body. When music begins, participants move any way they want as long as they continue to balance the paper. If the paper falls off, the player freezes until someone else picks up the paper and gives it to this player. The player can then balance the paper on a different body part and move again. Encourage experimentation for different ways to move. Remind them to assist frozen members. No talking during the activity.

Variation: Divide into teams, and create a finish line for teams to get to, making sure they have their papers as they cross the finish line.

Purpose: physical exploration, teamwork

Source: Unknown source, adapted

Preparing for Scene Work

What's Beyond/Where

One player moves through the space making an entrance and an exit, showing what room the player has left and what room the player is going to. No action takes place except that which communicates what is beyond. For example, a player enters, yawning and stretching, and while walking across the space, she slowly unbuttons and eases out of a loose-fitting garment, rubs tongue over teeth, exits.

Purpose: communicating entrances and exits, environment

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Weather Exercise

Players are in two teams. One team at a time agrees upon a type of weather and shows it. Players individually focus on showing the weather.

Variation 1: Show the weather without using the hands

Variation 2: Add a where, who, and what to the scene

Purpose: clarifying setting, visualization

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Stage Picture

Players move in and out and around each other. When you call out "Stage Picture!" players must instantly hold. If some part of each and every individual is not visible to the audience, continue to side-coach, saying "Stage Picture!" Players must make themselves visible (by getting down on knees, raising arms, etc.).

Variation: Do the exercise with continuous movement and continuous awareness of stage picture.

Purpose: awareness of playing space and audience

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Verbalizing the Where

Teams of two players agree on where, who, and what and are in the playing area. Without leaving their chairs, players go through the scene verbally, describing actions in the given setting and their relation to other players. Players narrate for themselves, not other players. When dialogue is necessary it is spoken to the other player. All verbalization is in the present tense.

Example: Player 1: "I tie my red and white apron around my waist and reach for the cloth-covered cookbook on the table. I sit down and open the book, looking for a recipe..."

Player 2: "I open the screen door and run into the kitchen. Darn it, I let the door slam again! "Hey Mom, I'm hungry. What's for dinner?"

Variation/Part 2: The same team actually gets up and performs the scene they verbalized. Speak only when dialogue is there.

Discuss how the first part of the game helped the second part of the game.

Purpose: break attitudes in work, openness, clarifying setting, staying in the present moment, bringing a scene to life

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Seeing the Word

One player goes on stage and describes an *actual* experience, such as taking a trip, watching a football game, visiting someone. The player maintains focus on the event during any side-coaching (the director may be saying, “Focus on color! Sounds! Weather! People! Smells! See yourself!”). As greater perception is awakened, note when the player begins to leave the word and relate to the scene. The voice will become natural, body relaxed, words will flow. Artificiality disappears.

Purpose: sense perception, improving monologues and dialogue, awareness

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Mirror Penetration

Players work with partners and decide on a simple relationship and a topic for discussion/movement. Begin the conversation facing each other. The director calls the name of a player, and the player assumes the partner’s facial structure while continuing discussion. Assuming the facial structure is different than mimicking the facial expression—it is deeper and more subtle. The director side-coaches by saying things like “Rebuild your nose like your partners—jawbone, forehead. Change the line of your chin.” Players must continue discussion without pausing as the director changes the mirror frequently.

Purpose: deep seeing of the other, awareness, inhabiting a different body

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Clarifying Scene Work

Give and Take

Players get in to teams of four, and then subdivide into teams of 2. Each team of 2 is at their own table and pursues a separate conversation. While continuing the conversation, both sub-teams must hear the other team so as to know when to give or take.

Part 1: Director calls "Table 1" and "Table 2" until how to play becomes clear to both teams. The sub-teams begin by conversing at the same time. When Table 1 is called, team 2 fades out and gives focus to Team 1. Fading out does not mean freeze, but rather to hold the action and converse silently and to be prepared to continue when it is time to take focus.

Part 2: When mutual giving of focus to opposite sub-team is understood players give focus back and forth without being side-coached.

Part 3: As above, sub-teams try to TAKE focus from one another.

Part 4: Sub-teams GIVE focus.

Part 5: Focus is given and taken without side-coaching.

Purpose: active listening, synergy, readiness

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Contact

2+ players agree on who, where, and what. Each player must make direct, physical contact with his or fellow player whenever verbal communication is made. With each new thought or change of dialogue comes a different physical contact. The player who initiates dialogue is responsible for making contact.

Non-verbals (nods, whistles, etc) do not require contact. When the side-coach says "Contact!" it means the actors have spoken without touching one another.

Variation: No contact twice in the same spot

Variation: No hands

Variation: No Feet

Purpose: building relationships, physicality, breaking down resistance

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Gibberish Interpreter

In teams of two, one player gives a speech or lecture in Gibberish to the audience. The second player is the interpreter. The speaker pauses for the interpreter's translations and then continues in Gibberish. The interpreter follows the speaker by reflecting the speaker's sound and meaning spontaneously in translation. The speaker reflects the interpreter by taking in the interpretation as if it accurately translates what was meant.

Variation: 3 players. Two players who speak different languages are both understood by a third player who sits between them and interprets in English. Conversation flows through the interpreter. After a satisfying exchange, the player on stage right leaves and the other two move over, leaving a seat for a new player, and all have new roles. The game continues until everyone has been an interpreter.

Purpose: following the follower, synergy, improvisational communication, physical communication

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Animal Images

If possible, take players to observe animals in nature, or watch animal videos, etc. Encourage them to take note of less obvious features such as bone structure as well as obvious characteristics of movement. Players take on the qualities of their chosen animal and move around the space as this animal. Coach the players to make the sounds of the animal once they have the physicalization. Then, coach the players to become human again, but to integrate their animal's qualities into their speech and movement. The exercise can even transform into a scene with these animal-based characters.

Purpose: character development, bodily exploration and integration

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Shadowing

Teams subdivide and where, who, and what are agreed upon. Team A plays the scene and Team B shadows them. The shadows make continuous comment to the actors they are shadowing. Shadows stay close to the actor and squeak quietly so that other actors and shadows do not hear. The shadows can comment on inner action if desired or simply the physical objects in the environment.

Purpose: character and story development and awareness, artistic detachment

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Therapeutic and Conflict Resolution

Commonalities

Players are divided into groups of three and go to different places in the room. Give the simple direction to find any three things they have in common, but direct them to avoid anything obvious or observable (“We are all wearing sneakers”). Ask each trio to appoint a spokesperson who will introduce the group and the commonalities. After all groups present, ask if anyone heard from another group something they also have in common.

Variation: Ask, “What three strengths do you share?”

Variation: Ask, “What three things make you angry?”

Purpose: group communication, discovery of commonalities

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Sound and Movement

Players stand in a circle. One person goes to another player while performing a sound a movement. The receiving person then takes on the sound and movement, moves to the center of the circle, and then allows the sound and movement to change into something new. They then take this sound and movement to a new person in the circle, and so forth.

Purpose: Freeing the body, kinesthetic empathy, group cohesion, address resistance
Source: Adapted by Emily Nussdorfer

Mirrors

Actors A and B are paired up and stand across from each other. Actor A does simple movement, Actor B mirrors. Switch. The movements can gradually become more expansive with the body and can travel around the room.

Eventually Actors A and B can “share the lead” or “follow the follower,” in which they mirror each other in a free flow.

Variation: With a large group, it can be fun to create a line down the center of the room, have partners stand on either side of the line, and allow for interaction amongst pairs. One person can stand out at a time and view the moving palindrome created by looking down the center of the line.

Variation: The exercise can also be done with music, or a variety of music selections to show changes of mood.

Purpose: trust, mutual empowerment, kinesthetic empathy, synchrony, freeing movement, concentration

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Invisible Tug of War

Players work in teams. Exactly as in traditionally tug of war, players try to pull each other over a center line—however, the rope is made of space substance and you cannot see it! Players must work together to see the rope and feel the strength of the other.

Purpose: transform competition into mutuality, visualization

Source: *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin

Group Motion

Players are divided into groups of 8 or 10. They link arms in a circle and follow directions without talking to one another. With arms linked, they are asked to establish a common sound and movement with both feet on floor. When accomplished, establish another sound and movement with one foot off the floor. Then repeat the exercise but moving forward and backward. Discuss afterwards the group process: Did one person start the motion or did it occur spontaneously in the group? Was everyone comfortable with the sound and motion? Did they want to do something else? How did it feel to cooperate with the whole group?

Purpose: synergy, group cohesion

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Circle of Trust

The group makes five or six smaller circles, with players standing shoulder to shoulder and with feet close together. A player volunteers to start and steps into the middle of the circle, closes the eyes, and falls backward. The rest of the group catches the player and gently places her upright. The player in the center should relax every muscle.

Variation: After the person is comfortable falling backwards, allow the group to transfer the weight whichever direction they want. The person in the middle should give all their weight to the group.

Purpose: group trust and support

Source: *Let's Improvise: Becoming Creative, Expressive & Spontaneous Through Drama* by Milton E. Polsky

Emotional Orchestra

The group clusters in two rows, facing the leader, who assumed the role of an orchestral conductor. Each person decides on an emotion to convey through a particular sound or word or short phrase. The conductor begins the orchestra by pointing to one or several people. At the conductor's discretion, volume and tempo can be played with, solos and duets initiated, and the entire group can emote at once. If words are being used, the conductor can even instigate emotional dialogues.

Purpose: emotional expression, discovering the individual in the whole

Source: *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Adverbs

One group member leaves the room and the remaining members decide on an adverb. When the designated member returns, she tries to guess what the adverb is by asking individuals to do tasks in that way (for example, talk to someone in the manner of that adverb).

Purpose: embodiment, dealing with resistance

Source: *Dramatic Activities to Facilitate Dance Therapy* by Johnson and Eicher

Doors

Four or five people form a line and in front of each is an imaginary door. Someone is chosen to open the doors one by one and behind them find a feeling, problem, object, or animal being presented by the person behind the door. Or, have everyone in a circle behind their own imaginary door and when the person in the center opens the door, whatever person, emotion, or object is behind then comes into the center, switching places with the original door opener

Purpose: uncovering hidden emotions and desires

Source: *Dramatic Activities to Facilitate Dance Therapy* by Johnson and Eicher

Chair Game

One member leaves and the rest of the group decides on the name of a famous person (for example, King of England). When the designated member returns, the other members treat her as the chosen famous person. The “famous person” tries to guess who she is.

Purpose: experiencing a new identity, accepting respect, dealing with resistance

Source: *Dramatic Activities to Facilitate Dance Therapy* by Johnson and Eicher

Hat

Group members write down ages, occupations, feelings, or names of famous people on slips of paper and put them in a hat. One by one they draw pieces of paper and nonverbally present what is written there while others guess what is presented.

Purpose: movement imagery, breaking down resistance

Source: *Dramatic Activities to Facilitate Dance Therapy* by Johnson and Eicher

Autobiographical Narrative

As a warm-up, play “I am,” in which players sit in a circle and complete the statement “I am...” as fully as possible without stopping. When they pause, the next player picks it up immediately. For example, someone might say, “I am a mother, writer, therapist, friend, reader, cleaner, driver, actor, advisor, student, cousin, dancer, collector...” and then when she pauses the next player speaks in a similar way. Then move into the option to create a monologue and can focus it on a critical incident/conflict in their lives. You can help players along by asking questions such as “What is important to you? Think about your past, present, and future. What are your goals? How is the conflict resolved? Discuss afterwards about personal discoveries and how the audience felt listening.

Purpose: self-awareness, coping with conflicts, empowerment

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Problem Cards

Create problem cards using typical problems of young people or consult a reference for documented youth issues (ex: pregnancy, anger, miscommunication with parents, drugs, etc.). Use the cards to create improvisational scenes. For example, for a pregnancy scene, cast the pregnant girl, a friend or two, a boyfriend, a mother, or a counselor. The characters play out the situation and verbalize and show different sides of the argument. Ask the audience for possible solutions once the problem has been clearly defined. The current cast can play it out or the audience members can take over the role to enact their idea.

Purpose: addressing group-specific issues, rehearsing positive solutions, improvisational skills

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Detours

Participants form two lines facing each other. Each person repeats the given line and adds his answer as he crosses over to the other side. All players will cross from one side to the other during the course of the exercise.

1. I get angry when...(the player crosses over to the other side as she finishes the statement)
2. When I'm angry, I usually...
3. People make me angry when they...
4. Parents make me angry when they...
5. Teachers make me angry when they...
6. One thing that really makes me angry is...
7. When I get angry, I feel like...
8. The last time I was angry I ...
9. I control my anger by...
10. I deal with another person's anger by...

Discuss what the participants discovered about themselves and others. Was there difficulty in finding something that caused anger?

Purpose: introduction to anger management, group understanding

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Stop Signs

Role-play a scene where Player 1's anger escalates, and she wants her way and wants to blame Player 2. Play it out to see how Player 2 can deal with the need of Player 1 to control the situation.

- 1: It's your fault!
- 2: It is not.
- 1: Oh, yes it is! You started the whole thing.
- 2: Don't blame me.
- 1: You're the only one to blame.
- 2: What about you?
- 1: Oh, no you don't. It's your fault. Admit it!
- 2: _____

Play the scene several times and see what solutions actors can come up with, discussing feelings afterwards. If someone succeeded in defusing anger, what were the techniques used? How do tone of voice, facial expression, and body language affect anger?

Exemplary lines for Player 2 to use:

"I know how you feel, and I'm really sorry"

"I wish I could change what happened, but I can't. What do you suggest?"

"Why don't we both count to ten and start over again."

"I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about."

"I'm going to slow down before I get hot."

Purpose: anger management, positive conflict resolution, communication

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Unfinished Dialogues

Two players volunteer to read a scene and decide who is Number 1 and Number 2. Players begin reading the scene, and when they run out of lines they continue to improvise. Afterwards discuss what the scene was about, how they felt, what they saw. Use these as examples and create your own vague conflict-based dialogues.

Dialogue 1:

1: I don't want to.

2: Why not?

1: I just don't want to.

2: That's no reason.

1: It's my reason.

2: That's stupid.

1: I don't care what you think.

2: Just wait until you want something from me.

1: _____

Dialogue 2:

1: Why won't you ever trust me?

2: I don't know. It's very hard for me to trust anybody.

1: But I'm not "anybody." I'm someone who cares about you.

2: I'd like to believe that.

1: Why can't you?

2: I want to, but...

1: You what?

2: Do you really want to know?

1: Yes, tell me.

2: _____

Purpose: conflict resolution, trying positive solutions

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

Court Trial

Players choose roles to play (judge, defense attorney, prosecutor, defendant, witnesses, bailiff, jury members). In the enactment of the scene, make sure to encourage nonverbal responses as well as the automatic verbal ones. The crime committed may be symbolic rather than realistic. The game uses imagination but also allows those who have experienced the court system to play out traumatic experiences in safety.

Purpose: coping with trauma, conflict resolution, improvisation, personal discovery

Source: *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

Reunion

Two players improvise meeting one another at some designated point in the future. The setting and time are specific. The actors respond to the encounter spontaneously. After the recognition and greeting, they talk about how and what they are doing and reminisce about the drama group they were once in together. Remind players to focus on reminiscence. This game is best used at the conclusion of a process and helps give the feeling of totality and acknowledgement of changes made during the process. If used earlier the focus could be on projection in the future rather than reminiscence.

Purpose: finding meaning, evaluation, easing closure

Source: *Acting for Real* by Renee Emunah

EXTRA GAMES – TEAM BUILDING

River Bank

Everyone stands in a circle. When “river” is called, everybody has to jump forward and when “bank” is called, everyone jumps backwards. The teacher mixes up the order. If you mess up or lose balance you are out.

Kho

The class is divided into 2 groups. Group A has enough space between them to spread their arms and the people beside each other face opposite directions. Group B stands in a line on the side. One member of group A is standing and is the first chaser. The runners from Group B run around the line while the chasers chase them. The runners can run in and around Group A, weaving through the squatters in any direction they choose. The chaser cannot change direction around the circle once she has started moving. The chaser can tap the back of a member of his own team saying “kho” and that person can take her place as chaser. The goal of the game is to tag as many of the runners on the opposite teams as fast as you can. Then the teams switch places. The team that completes the task faster wins.

Synergy

Count off in 5s. The group needs to build a spaceship (or bicycle, a cake, etc.). Everyone must come up with a job that has to happen in order for the thing to be built. The job has a corresponding action and sound. Give 3 minutes to discuss. Groups begin building the spaceship with everyone doing the jobs at once.

Haa

Students make a big circle and say “HA” becoming progressively louder. Students can also form two lines if they wish and compete to see who can say Ha louder and faster. The first group to finish making the sound down the row and back wins.

Bee Process

Students sit and close their eyes. With their index finger, they partially close their ears and hum “mmmmmm” like a bee. Sway the body side to side and back and forth for 2 minutes and continue to hum. Make a slow circle from right to left, and left to right. The teacher claps to signal the end. Students keep their eyes closed and feel the silence for 5-10 minutes.

Animal Exercises (this can be done in Moving in the Space Game)

The teacher calls out animals and everyone becomes that animal. Students walk, talk, and look like the animal. Rules: 1: You can only make the sounds of the animal being called- no human conversations. 2: You must move like the animal, so no human walking. 3: You cannot touch others as a matter of safety. 4: Freeze when freeze is called. The teacher then calls out the name of different animals to transition.

Praising

Students make a circle with one person in the middle. Everyone takes turns praising that person. Everyone must speak, except the person in the middle is not allowed to speak. After each person praises, the person in middle steps out for someone new. Everyone takes a turn in the middle.

I Like You

Students sit in a circle. One person gets up and goes to another person and asks "Do you like me?" If the other person replies "Yes" everybody has to get up and run to another place. If the person says "No" then the person who is it asks, "then whom do you like?" to which the person may reply "people who wear glasses," and everyone who wears glasses would have to run to another place. The last to sit is out.

Dog and Bone

Students are divided into two teams and give themselves numbers. Both the teams stand facing each other at two ends of the room. A scarf or other object is placed in the middle. When a number is called, one person from each team runs to the middle and circles around the scarf, with one hand folded behind the back. Whoever runs away with the scarf gets a point. If the other person touches her, then she is out. Whichever team gets 10 points first wins.

Aum Game

Students sit in a circle and count off numbers. Any number containing 3 or a multiple of 3 will say AUM. If anyone hesitates, says the wrong number, or misses saying AUM, they're out, and the others continue. The last one remaining wins.

Touchline-Reverse Running

Players are divided into two groups and stand on two lines, with some distance between them. there should be some distance of running space even behind them. Each group is given a name—Red and Blue. If the leader calls Red, that team has to run away (backwards) and Blue runs to catch them. If Blue is called, Red runs to catch blue.

Q and A

Students sit in pairs. One person thinks of a famous figure, the other asks questions that can be answered yes or no. See who can solve the puzzle the fastest. Then students have a conversation in which they do not use the word “no” or say anything in the negative. For example—Q: “Do you have any brothers?” A: “I have 3 sisters, what about you” The first person to catch the other answering the negative wins.

Fire on the Mountain

Everyone runs around in a circle singing fire in the mountain, run, run, run. The teacher calls out groups of 4 or 7. The students need to quickly get in groups of the designated number and there should naturally be one left out. Those who are out of the group are out. the game continues. As they are running, students could also make animal sounds or make hand gestures.

Walking Party

Participants walk around with index cards noting the names of 3-5 people who share similar characteristics (such as same hand size, birth month, favorite type of music, number of siblings).

Pillow Change (can use yoga mats)

Each person sits on a pillow in a circle with one extra pillow in the circle. Then one person is in the center of the circle and attempts to sit on the unoccupied pillow. As they get close, the people sitting next to the unoccupied pillow move to occupy it and everyone fills in the pillows around the circle. When the center person finally gets on a pillow, the person who failed to fill it goes to the center.

Partner Tag

Students are in pairs, hooked arms, spread around the room. One person is the runner and one person is the chaser. The goal of the game is for the chaser to tag the runner, who is looking to grab the unoccupied arm of any pair. The person who is not newly hooked then becomes the new runner and the chaser follows the new runner. If the chaser tags the runner they become “it.”

Lion and the Deer

Everybody stands in a circle. 2 people come to the middle and are blindfolded and given a noisemaker in their hands. Both consistently make noises. Each is told separately either “you are the lion” or “you are the deer”—the lion chases the deer. The circle keeps them inside the boundary. When the deer is caught two different people go in the middle.