Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice

Tools for Teaching Improvisation

Postcards

Directions

Step 1: Split participants into groups of 4-5.

Step 2: Each group is asked to create a tableau for a "postcard" (e. g. Paris, Sydney, a hockey game, the local mall).

Step 3: Give the groups a short time (one or two minutes) to plan the ingredients of their postcard (e.g. if the postcard is Paris, one person might be the Eiffel tower, two more might pose as a waiter and a customer at a sidewalk café, another might pretend to be painting the scene).

Step 4: Ask each group member to jump into the "picture" one at a time and announce what they are, before freezing in place.

Step 5: When the group is in place, ask them to hold their pozes and then announce (together) "Welcome to….." the location.

Advanced variation: Give the groups no time to prepare or discuss beforehand. Give the location and then immediately ask each group member in turn to jump in.

Source: Based on the game "Creating a Stage Picture" by Viola Spolin.

Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1963. 273.

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