Improv Workshop Tip Sheet for College Teaching

Created by Jake Livengood, Senior Assistant Director, Graduate Student Career Services

You can set the tone in the classroom.

- You will not be perfect. That’s ok!
- You bring value to the classroom.
- You don’t have to have all of the answers, but you should know how to respond when you don’t know.
- We have our doubts, but try not to let them overcome you. Students also bring doubts into the classroom, which may influence their actions.
- Your energy level should match and exceed that of your students.
- “You have fun, they can have fun.”

Improv Concepts – All can be used in the classroom

- Yes and
- Listening
- Communicating with confidence in your own genuine voice
  - Verbal and nonverbal communication
- Creating a supportive environment
- Guide on the side, not sage on the stage: Facilitate the discussion.

Handling questions - Reacting to unexpected questions

Practice the EXPERT Method

Expect that an unexpected question or situation will arise.

Prepare ahead of time for those potential situations.

Evaluate the uncomfortable situation that is happening (briefly).

Respond to the student with confidence.

Talk with a trusted person (peer, advisor, others).
Bringing awareness to the surface: Freud’s Conscious and Unconscious Mind

My nervous style

Check all that apply below. These are only a few examples. Please add your own individual responses as well. These include verbal, non-verbal and thought responses.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Talk faster</td>
<td>□ Muscles become tense</td>
<td>□ “I’m inarticulate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Voice volume becomes softer</td>
<td>□ Discomfort in stomach</td>
<td>□ “I can’t do this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Voice volume becomes louder</td>
<td>□ Face becomes red</td>
<td>□ “They’ll see my faults.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Stumble when speaking</td>
<td>□ Sweat more</td>
<td>□ “I know I’ll say something dumb.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Can’t find the word to say</td>
<td>□ Use fillers such as um and uh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional ways you react when nervous:

*Thoughts adapted from Imposter Syndrome Workbook by Valerie Young. 2004.*

A few strategies to address nervous responses:

- Take the power away from the anxiety: Practice being in situations where you are anxious. (ImprovBoston has drop-in sessions on Saturdays for free in Central Square).
- Recognize rational versus irrational thoughts.
- Use deep breathing techniques.
- Develop a trusted network to discuss your experiences.
- Talk slower.
- Additional options that fit your style: