

Workshop Break down example

Preparation for the workshop

To encourage students to consider what cultural and identity means to them we will ask the teacher to get students to write a paragraph about an occasion where they felt their identity was challenged or where they experienced an internal conflict of identity. Examples from past workshops include: A girl who chose to remain celibate for religious reasons in spite of social pressures; a boy from a non-English speaking country who spoke little English and was therefore branded 'stupid' at school but managed to find his voice through theatrical performance during the workshop.

Introduction & Performance

Introduction of the Conflict Relief group and our methodology of improvisation and storytelling to challenge preconceived perceptions of ourselves and each other as well as highlight and embrace cultural similarities and differences. This is followed by a performance of one of our sketches from our show, 'The Arab, the Jew & the Chicken' that reflects our use of humor to explore cultural identity.

Warm up - *Beginning the Exploration of Individuality and Group Cohesion*

We will facilitate a series of warm up activities to get the participants energized and focused. This induces the emotional, physical and intellectual energy and self-awareness required, allowing internalized feelings to become more visible and present within the group. Activating these energies enables a positive group cohesion – where participants can express themselves freely and do not feel isolated and private with their emotions.

Techniques

We will facilitate a series of exercises that will enable the students to devise their own stories. The techniques they will acquire are:

- **Improvisation – Self Confidence & Collaboration**

Improvisation is the basis of all creative devising processes. In improvisation there is no right or wrong. This allows complete creative freedom where one is not held back by their fear of failure. A successful improvisation requires that all participants accept each other's input.

We will facilitate a series of activities aimed at introducing the basic principles of improvisation that will allow the students to listen to and accept each other's ideas.

- **Physical theatre – Culture & Self Expression**

Physical theatre allows students the freedom to express themselves without the boundary of language. It accommodates the dramatisation of cultural practices that are non-verbal.

We will facilitate a series of exercises that look at the building of a character through physicalization.

Students will gain the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of a form of theatre that enables them to express themselves in alternate ways. This will allow them to explore difficult subject matters and/or identity issues through the use of physicality as opposed to text.

- **Styles & Tools of Theatre – *Representations of Cultural Narratives***

This section will explore various other forms of comedy such as satire, black comedy, theatre of the absurd; and the ways in which emotions, comic timing and rhythm play a part in such styles of theatre.

Students will be given additional tools such as 'rule of three', 'line-move' and the 'snowball effect', to incorporate into their stories. This will further enable them to address difficult subject matters such as cultural conflicts, family disputes, and any challenging identity related topics through rhythm control and timing.

Devising: Storytelling based on Culture & Identity

Based on our own methodology of storytelling, we will facilitate a group discussion on how personal stories are the basis of all sketches, and how they can serve as powerful cultural statements that reflect important social issues. Participants will be encouraged to share stories which will become the basis of their sketches to be improvised. (Depending on the duration of the workshop, developing these stories can also include family testimonies, neighbors, and intergeneration work and develop into community programmers).

Devising process

Participants will be given time to rehearse their improvised stories in their groups. They will be encouraged to incorporate elements of techniques covered in the session. Through continued improvisation, students will be guided on the process of how to work together as collaboration in order to create a final performance.

Performance & Discussion

Participants will perform their sketches to each other. In each performance, we will look at the various culture and identity themes of the stories, and elaborate on any social messages that emerge.