

Online Adaptations for the Classroom (for Zoom, WebEx, and other online models)

We finished writing *All the Classroom's a Stage* before the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major change at most educational institutions: the shift to primarily online learning. After reading the book, we're confident you'll be able to apply the concepts and exercises in-person, hybrid or online, in any classroom, regardless of subject-matter.

We have supplied a sample selection of additions to the book's appendices that demonstrate how you can adapt some traditionally in-person and interactive theater exercises to the online realm, whether you're meeting with your students in Zoom, WebEx, or any Video Conference online classroom. For each of them, you can still apply all steps, including benefits and discussion points, of the original exercise. Consider these additions as ideas to help achieve these activities in an online environment. Once you've read through them, develop ideas for other activities that might work for your classroom.

Appendix A: *Blind Offers*

How To:

- Conduct as described, but instruct students to stand up within their "window."
- Encourage them to use their space to make their physical offer, making sure their offer is visible and clear within the frame. You might have to do a "sound check" to make sure everyone knows how loud their "thank you" will need to be.
- Once their place in the frame is clear, remind them not to look at themselves, but at their partner; that partner, after all, is who they're giving their offer to.
- Conduct the exercise as written.

Benefits:

- Physicality: Many students are sitting at their computers for hours every day, between scheduled classes, course readings, supplemental videos, and studying. *Blind Offers* fulfills an often-forgotten need to move, energize, and intentionally seek connection with another person in an otherwise stagnant day.
- Trust: One of the biggest challenges students face in the switch to online learning is in trying to answer the question *Can I Do This?* This exercise reminds them that they can communicate with their classmates, that the classroom is a safe place, and that they're more than another face in the *Brady-Bunch* grid.

Discussion

- How did you feel getting out of your chair and engaging in the class activity? What other opportunities might you have to stand up, stretch, and remain connected to the class?
- How did it feel to connect with a classmate? How can you apply that connection to your regular online interaction?

Appendix H: *One Word at a Time Storytelling*

How To:

- Instead of a circle, you'll need to declare a "running order." Depending on the number of students, this might be something you can tell them ("Briana, then Nelson, then Mary, then Tri, then James, then Briana") or you can post the order in the Chat window. Individual students will usually remember who goes before them, but it's often helpful to have the chat window, or you can chime in with occasional coaching and reminders.
- After a few times "around the circle," the students should be familiar with the order and you can let the story develop.

Benefits:

- Student interaction: instead of listening to a lecture, viewing a PowerPoint, or watching a video, students get to connect to one another. This type of "icebreaker" will make it easier for you to conduct group discussions down the line and they'll be more prepared to answer questions and offer ideas.
- The first few times you do this exercise, often the story will break down or become nonsensical and you'll end up with a grid full of laughing students relieved at the chance to be a little silly. There's nothing wrong with that; the release and relief that comes from laughter will likely help them connect with their class, and the learning, in a positive way.

Discussion:

- Not surprisingly, the discussion points from the book's index still apply to every step of this exercise.
- Did a technological problem interfere with the story? Did someone's sound cut out at the worst possible moment? How did you cope with the tech issue? It's a great chance to point out that tech problems will happen – all the time – and you'll all work together to overcome them, without them having a negative impact on the collaborative experience, even if the story gets a little muddy. (Again, an opportunity for silliness, rather than distress.)

Note: Appendix J: *Three-Headed Alien* can be adjusted very similarly to this exercise, with similar benefits and discussion points.

Appendix L: *What Are You Doing?*

How To:

- Similar to Appendix H, instead of students standing in two lines, you'll need to declare a "running order." Depending on the number of students, this might be something you can tell them ("Briana, then Nelson, then Mary, then Tri, then James, then Briana") or you can post the order in the Chat window.
- You'll need to coach a bit more, especially in the early attempts. An example:
 - You: Nelson, ask Mary.
 - Nelson: Mary, what are you doing?
 - Mary: Brushing my teeth.
 - [Nelson acts out brushing his teeth in his frame.]
 - You: Tri, ask Nelson.
 - Tri: Nelson, what are you doing?
 - Nelson: [stops brushing his teeth] Riding a bike.
 - [Tri rides a bike.]
- Encourage the students to stand up and use their bodies in the frame to act out the physical activity.
- After a few rounds, the students will get used to the order and you can let it run for a few more rounds.

Benefits:

- Just as in the "in-person" version, encourage the students to watch the performances and gain inspiration from what's happening in the room.
- Physical Activity: Similar to Blind Offers, in that the students get out of their chairs and move around.
- Interaction: The focus of the class stops being you, or the PowerPoint, and becomes the class itself, with the video conference as the shared stage.

Discussion:

- How did you feel getting out of your chair and engaging in the class activity? What other opportunities might you have to stand up, stretch, and remain connected to the class?
- How did it feel to connect with a classmate? How can you apply that connection to your regular online interaction?
- Did a technological problem interfere with the interaction? Did someone's sound cut out at the exact wrong moment? Was there a video lag when you started acting out your physical activity? How did you cope with the tech issue? It's another chance to point out that tech problems will happen – all the time – and you'll all work together to overcome them, without them having a negative impact on the collaborative experience. (They *can* do this.)