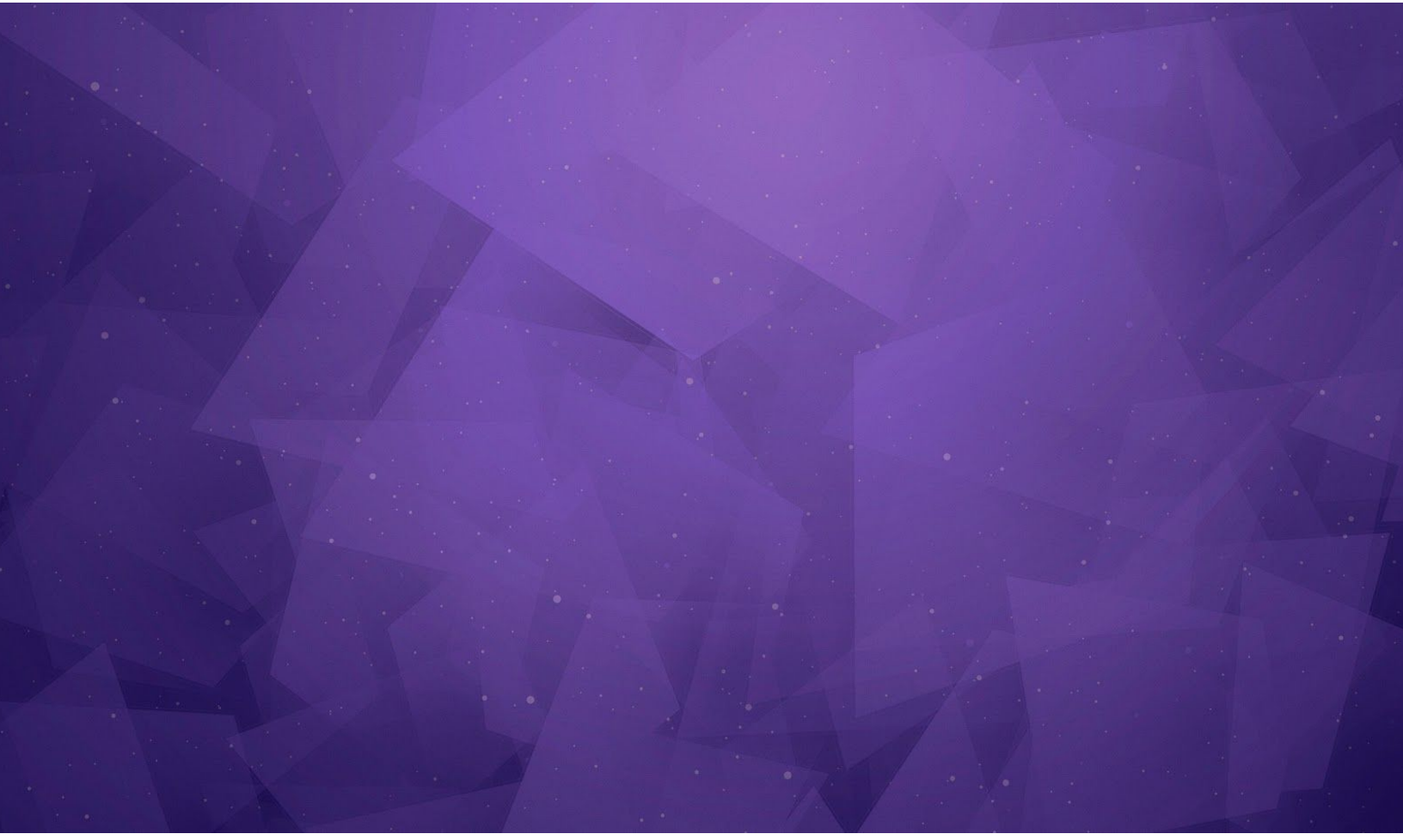




Improvisation Concepts Online

Activities to Keep Your Team Engaged
While Working Remotely

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Introduction

If you're reading this, you are probably a teacher, parent, and/or a Destination Imagination Team Manager looking for ways to keep your students engaged while learning from home. You're not alone! This guide contains some recommended activities to use to promote teamwork and creative thinking—all while working from a virtual platform.

This guide is intended to supplement our Improvisation Concepts Online webinar. If you missed it, watch the [recording here](#). The recording includes a demonstration of each of the activities described within this guide.

Still have questions or want to learn more about Destination Imagination? [Contact us](#) or check out the other great resources [on our website](#).

Zoom Resources

Our webinar was delivered in a Zoom meeting, so you'll notice we frequently use Zoom functions like Breakout Rooms. If you need assistance using those functions, we'd recommend using [Zoom's training sessions and tutorials](#). However, these activities will work in any virtual platform, and you are encouraged to use the one that is most convenient for you.

Before You Play

Give each team member the opportunity to check out the limitations of their space. Can they play sitting or standing? Are there objects or furniture around them they will need to avoid? Are they wearing headphones with a cord? Are there people nearby who would be disturbed by loud noises they make? Gently remind your team that they are responsible for maintaining control of their bodies and voices during all activities.

Superhero Names

Time: 10-15 minutes

Objectives: teamwork, communication, performing in a virtual space

This activity is great to use as a warm-up or if your team is still getting to know each other! To start, ask each team member to create their own Superhero Name. It should consist of two words: 1) an adjective that starts with the same letter as their name, and 2) their first name. Give your team a moment to think about their own Superhero Name. (*Examples: Silly Sally, Joyful Jamal*)

Accommodation:
If a team member is not able to use their camera, ask the team to create sound effects instead of gestures!

Ask team members to create a gesture that accompanies their Superhero Name. Give your team a moment to practice it within their own screens.

Reflection Questions:
What was the biggest challenge in this game?

What did you and your teammates do to be successful in this game?

One at a time, let each team member state their Superhero Name to the group and demonstrate their gesture. Everyone else should repeat the name and gesture.

After everyone has shared their Superhero Names, you start calling to each other. To make a call, you state your own Superhero Name and do your own gesture, then state the Superhero Name/gesture for the person you want to call. Example: "Hero A (*Hero A gesture*) to Hero B (*Hero B gesture*)". Then Hero B would continue that pattern to call the next person.

Extension:
If time allows, try another round - but this time their Superhero Name can use vocabulary they will use in their Challenge. Engineering teams can try architecture terms, Fine Arts teams can try literature terms - whatever fits within their Challenge!

In order to complete the call, each person must use the accurate Superhero Name and gesture.

After everyone has been called, start again - but this time, only use the gestures!

Yes, And! Stories

Time: 5-10 minutes

Objectives: improvisation concepts, team building, clear and effective storytelling

Many Improv teams will already be familiar with the core improv concept of “Yes, and” - where team members are encouraged to say **yes** to their teammate’s idea **and** add onto it. This activity will let teams quickly review and practice this idea.

Accommodation:
If your team includes students who are nonverbal, considering pantomiming or drawing each new part of your story.

Start by giving your team the first line of a story. Examples: “Let’s go on a trip!”, “Let’s plan a surprise party!”

Use the Breakout Rooms feature to divide your team into pairs or groups of three. Give them a set amount of time to work in their Breakout Rooms (1-2 minutes is recommended). In their Breakout

Rooms, they are to take turns adding a line onto the story. The first person will say the prompt you gave them. The second person will say “yes, and”, then add their own line. This pattern continues until time is up.

(Note: It helps if you do an example of what these stories will look like before sending them into their Breakout Rooms. You can also demonstrate why it’s important to use the “yes, and” rule - it’s hard to keep the story moving if you don’t! See the recording for more details.)

When time is up, reassemble your team in your Zoom call. Ask for volunteers to share a summary of what happened in their story. You’ll notice right away that, even though they all started with the same line, using the rule of “yes, and” leads to a lot of unique possibilities!

Extension:

Once your team has tried this activity in pairs, see what happens if you try it with the whole team!

Reflection Questions:

What did you do when your partner(s) said something you weren’t expecting?

How can you use the rule of “yes, and” in your Team Challenge?

Go, Stop, Melt, Pop!

Time: 10-20 minutes

Objectives: creativity, performing in a virtual space

This activity will get your team thinking about all the different ways to perform in a virtual space! This activity is highly flexible for team members who are in different types of locations or have different physical abilities. It also reinforces the improv concept of “show, don’t tell” to help your audiences learn more about character and story.

Start by establishing the rules of the game:

- When you say “**Go**”, team members can move freely, as long as they are visible within their screen.
- When you say “**Stop**”, team members must freeze their bodies and voices immediately.
- When you say “**Melt**”, team members slowly ease back to a safe/neutral position (standing or sitting, depending on where they are).
- When you say “**Pop**”, team members pop their eyes back to you to listen to new instructions.

Using these parameters, guide your team through finding different ways of moving through their virtual space. Encourage them to use words or sound effects when applicable. There are many ways you can accomplish this goal, but here are some suggestions:

- Ask teams to move as if they were very old or very young.
- Ask teams to move like different animals.
- Ask teams to move like they are made of different materials (water, rock, gummy worms, etc.).

- Ask teams to find ways of moving across the bottom of their screen, the top of their screen, the side of their screen, as close to the screen as possible, as far from the screen as possible.

Extensions:

Let your team members take turns giving the instructions of the game!

If your team has already created a story for their Team Challenge, try this activity as a "day in the life" of the characters in their Presentation.

Reflection Questions:

How were you able to use your body/voice/imagination to play the game?

How did you use your current space to play the game?

Would it have been different if we were playing in person?

Fairy Tale Slideshows

Time: 10-15 minutes

Objectives: clear and effective storytelling, performing in a virtual space

This activity will reinforce literature vocabulary and help guide your teams into telling a story online.

Start by giving your team a quick recap/tutorial on the following vocabulary terms for story structure:

- A good story has three main sections in its plot: **beginning**, **middle**, and **end**.
- In the beginning, we learn about the **characters** (*who* is in the story) and the **setting** (*where* the story happens).
- In the middle, we have a **conflict** - something goes wrong!
- In the end, we solve the conflict/find a **resolution**. (Important note: it doesn't necessarily have to be a happy ending.)

As a team, create an example slideshow with three images to represent the beginning, middle, and end of a story. Teams are to use their bodies to create each image. Discuss how to show each key term through your three images.

In our webinar, we used the story of Cinderella as an example because it is well-known and has adaptations across many cultures. Our example looked like this:

- In the first image, one team member posed as Cinderella sweeping while the others posed as parts of the house.
- In the second image, one team member posed as Cinderella running away while another posed as the Prince looking distraught. (A third team member posed as the ticking clock to show it was midnight!)
- In the third image, two team members posed as Cinderella and the Prince trying on the glass slipper. Another team member posed as a grumpy stepsister.

Once your team has tried an example, use the Breakout Rooms to divide your team into 2-3 groups. Ask each group to come up with a slideshow with three images to represent a new story. Give them 2-3 minutes to prepare before bringing them back together.

Your groups have some choices about how they'd like to present these images while working virtually. Beginner teams might like to have just one person make

Once you're all back, allow each group to present the slideshow they created. (Note: to make it easier to see just the presenting group, ask everyone else to turn off their cameras.) After the group has finished, see if their teammates can guess which story they were presenting. If they can, that means the team was successful at sharing the key details of their story!

Extension:

As time allows, encourage your students to augment their slideshows by using sound effects, dialogue, and/or props.

Reflection Questions:

What was most challenging about presenting a story this way?
What did you and your group do to make sure your story was clear?