

# ***DISTANCE LEARNING EXERCISES***

## ***FROM BEKAH SCHNEIDER VIDEOS***

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### **TIGER ALIEN COW**

- Synchronous task using video conferencing
- **Goal:** To get everyone to do the same action at the same time
- There are three positions:
  - Tiger: Two hands in claw position, and make a “Rar” noise
  - Cow: Both hands beside head, and make a “Moo” noise
  - Alien: Both hands over head, and make a “Bleep, bleep, bleep” noise
- Give a 1, 2, 3, go count. Everyone has to pick one of the three actions. The goal is everyone chooses (without conferring) to do the same action.
- Repeat. Can students get to a point where everyone, in their own spaces chooses the same action?

### **8 TO 1 SHAKE DOWN**

- Synchronous task using video conferencing
- Start with the right hand, move to the left hand, right foot, then left foot. This is the pattern.
- Shake each body part on a count of 8, then a count of 7, 6, 5, 4,3,2,1.

### **OBJECT CREATE**

- Synchronous task using video conferencing
- Ask students to create an object in their own space:
  - Form a banana
  - A stapler
  - A blender
  - A box of Kleenex
  - A roll of toilet paper

## MAKING NOISE

- Make a playlist from videos of people making noise in unique ways.
  - Examples: Pentatonix, Patty cake song, Andrew Wong doing 99 Red balloons with balloons, Tom Thumb the beatboxer
- Play them for students.
- Challenge students to make their own 30 second video of them making noise.
  - Asynchronous; have students record and send to you

## IMPROV: COMMERCIAL

- Synchronous or Asynchronous
- There are examples of the activity on YouTube: Search *Whose Line is it Anyway* - Infomercial. Watch them ahead of time to choose one that fits your school standards.
- Create a flip grid assignment with your chosen video.
- Students watch and then complete the assignment, either on their own and they record and send it to you, or as part of an online class using Zoom, Google Hangouts, Google meet or another platform. You could also do one-to-one sessions with students.
- Students have 2 minutes to improv a commercial where they have to sell a used paper towel tube, a used straw, an empty bag, or something else along those lines.
- This was a final assessment for my improv class.

## SOUND EFFECTS

- Can be done synchronously or asynchronously
- Suggestions - Live class: Zoom. Asynchronous: Flipgrid
- Give students a selection of 10 sound effects.
  - Eg: Squeaky door, slamming door, wind blowing, dog walking on a floor, running water, rustling of trees
- Asynchronously: Students choose 4 sounds, create the sounds, record and send them to you.
- Synchronously: Using breakout rooms in Zoom, students are divided into groups. Each group must work together to figure out how to create 4 sounds live.
- Give groups a limited amount of time and bring them back to the main room. Each group presents their sounds.

## NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: VERSIONS

- **Version 1:** Museum recreation picture
  - Asynchronous
  - Students choose a famous piece of art from a museum.
  - They recreate that picture with what they have at home.
  - Students take a picture and send it to you.
- **Version 2:** Video conferencing game
  - Synchronous
  - One person is It
  - Everyone on Zoom strikes a pose in their own space. A big, bold, statue-like pose. Their goal is to change into another pose without being caught.
  - The person who is It watches the screen - can they catch someone moving?
  - If someone is caught, they are out.
  - Gets students doing something physical
- **Version 3:** Flipgrid Fun
  - Students have to create four museum statue poses and submit to you.
  - It's not about creating the costume but copying the physicality.

## GO, STOP, CLAP, JUMP

- Video Conferencing, where students can see you, you can see them
- Give a command "Go" and students walk in their space.
- Give a command "Stop" and students stop.
- Give a command "Clap" and students clap their hands.
- Give a command "Jump" and students jump in place.
- Practice each of the commands.
- Remember, they can only stop when you say Stop. So if you say "Go" and then "Clap" they have to clap while they keep walking
- Once they get good at the commands, change the meaning of the commands:
  - Go means Stop
  - Stop means Go
  - Clap means Jump
  - Jump means Clap
- Now the game takes focus, and there's a lot of laughter as they try to remember the change.

## CONTENTLESS SCENE: SOUND EFFECTS

- Used with breakout rooms in Zoom
- Put three/four students in a break out room.
- Give each group a short contentless scene. This is a scene without context, character, emotion, location. Students have to fill in the blanks.
  - Hi
  - Hello
  - Are you ready?
  - Yes.
  - Are you sure?
  - No.
- Two of the group members do the lines. The third/fourth group member has to create live sound effects.
- Set a timer.
- Bring the groups back to perform.

## EMOTION EXERCISE

- Synchronously (live classroom with Zoom, Google Meet) or asynchronously (students record to Flipgrid, or upload video)
- **Goal:** go through a range of emotions.
- Start with basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, scared, excited)
  - Ask students 'What does sad look like?'
  - Identify physical actions that go with those emotions (eg. shoulders sagging).
- Have students demonstrate emotions for you. Go through a list of 5 and identify the physical actions that go with those emotions.
- Have students demonstrate an emotion and others have to guess the emotion.
- For an asynchronous activity, have students demonstrate on video five different emotions, with a focus on the physical action and send it to you.
- You can also have students identify the different categories of emotions. Do the difference between this fear: "Oh there's a spider" and this fear: "The zombies are going to get me."
  - As students: What does each type of fear look like and how are they different?
  - Again, emphasize the physical action that is connected to each category of emotion. Practice it with their bodies.

## THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG: EDPUZZLE

- Asynchronous task using [Edpuzzle](#)
- Students watch some theatre, answer questions, and also laugh
- Students watch a video (I used [this YouTube clip](#) about *The Play That Goes Wrong*)
- Post video to Edpuzzle with the following questions:
  - Do you know what a mishap is? What is a mishap in theater?
  - Who's your favorite character and why?
  - What was your favorite mishap and why?
  - Did you like this and why/why not?

## NEWSIES CHOREOGRAPHY

- Asynchronous
  - I think it would be quite a challenge to do it live because of video lagging in Zoom or Google Meet.
- [Newsies choreography video](#)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSEUR2gZUFc>
- This video breaks down and teaches a dance. Students can pause it and go over sections as many times as they need.
- Have students learn the dance and submit it via Google Classroom, Flipgrid or they could email you videos directly.
- The choreography is taught in pairs, but it could easily be done by an individual.
- Students do need a newspaper, but when I teach it in class, we practice using regular copy paper.
- A great exercise to get your students up and moving.

## CHILDREN STORY READALOUD

- Asynchronous task.
- Students will need a kid's storybook.
  - If they don't have one they could go online to the library and do a cyber checkout, or there are people on Twitter who are reading their books.
  - Or get a public domain fairy tale.

- Students record themselves reading the story to you and submit.
- Guidelines:
  - Choose a short story (eg: *Green Eggs and Ham* length)
  - Or choose the first five pages.
  - Demonstrate at least three different voices in your reading, not including the narrator. (You may want to provide a model of this.)
  - Record to a platform (eg. Flipgrid)

## CHARACTER VOICE/PHYSICAL WORK

- Asynchronous task
- Students pick a song that they are super comfortable with.
  - You could assign a song, but I think it's a lot of fun just to see what songs students pick.
  - Clarify what you're willing to hear in the lyrics and what you're not willing to hear in the lyrics.
- Ask students to write down the lyrics, or have the lyrics in front of them.
- Give students a selection of characters, voices, accents, styles to perform the song in. For example:
  - Pirate, Old Man, Alien, Valley Girl, British Accent, someone laughing so hard, a baby, Shakespearean style, sailor, soldier, French accent, etc.
- Ask them to switch selection every two lines as they go through the song.
- You can also ask students to physicalize the song through different theatre styles. For example:
  - Do the first two lines in a Commedia style, in the Brecht style, in an Absurd style, etc.
- You can ask students to physicalize the song through different characters.
- Students record and submit to you.

## MONOLOGUE LINE ANALYSIS

- Asynchronous task for students working on a monologue
- Divide the monologue up into lines, not where the punctuation is, but line by line on the page. A line might end halfway in the middle of a sentence.
- Have students write down a gesture for every line.
  - You may want to model this with students to show them what you're looking for
- Emphasize that they need to make conscious choices about when you move in a monologue and why you move. Helps them focus on motivated vs unmotivated movement.
- Repeat the exercise by asking students to write down a physical stance for each line of the monologue.
- Repeat the exercise by having students write down a blocking movement for each line of the monologue.
- Repeat the exercise by asking students to write down an emotion for each line of the monologue. What emotion is their character feeling on each line?
- Repeat the exercise by asking students to write down their objective on each line so that they're really tracking their beats and when it changes and identifying each and every tactic.
- This could easily be a week's worth of work for you with a student working on monologues. Once they write their choices into each line, have students physicalize these choices.

## SUBTEXT AND MOTIVATION

- Could be synchronous, or asynchronous with students using a tool to submit: Flipgrid, Google Hangouts or Meet, Google Classroom, Schoology, Canva or whatever you use
- Students explore subtext and motivation. Subtext is the emotion that comes through beyond the words of a line.
- Give students a simple sentence "I'm fine."
  - One after the other, ask students "How are you."
  - Students explore saying the line with a subtext different than the words "I'm fine." How do they share they're not fine?
  - **Assignment:** Students record themselves saying I'm fine in 19 different ways.

- Motivation example:
  - I give this example of making a turkey sandwich for somebody. Did I go to the refrigerator to pull out the turkey sandwich because I love somebody and I want to give this to them, and I know that this will bless their day and encourage them? Or did I go to the refrigerator to pull out the turkey sandwich because the turkey sandwich is poisoned and I actually want to kill the person? The actions might be the same, but the motivation for going to the refrigerator is entirely different.
  - **Assignment:** Students have to give an example of two tasks that they will complete (eg. turning on the tv, making a turkey sandwich). For each task they have to record themselves showing two different reasons, two different motivations for doing the task.

## READERS THEATRE MEETS RADIO THEATRE

- Synchronous task
- This exercise uses Readers Theatre (where students do not have to memorize) and Radio Theatre (where students must work together to bring the sounds of the piece to life).
- Choose a poem that doesn't have clear cut parts.
  - Eg: Twas the Night before Christmas, Dr. Seuss book, Jabberwocky
- Send the poem to students ahead of time.
- Tell them to read the poem on their own and decide what "part" they want (remembering that there aren't any designed parts).
  - So if you're using 'Twas the Night before Christmas, someone might say - "I want to make jingle bell sounds." Somebody else would have the idea of "What would sugar plums dancing in your head sound like?".
  - They're creating parts that don't exist.
  - You can brainstorm ideas ahead of time on that, or have them decide on their own.
- Spend one class talking about their "part" choices and identifying who is going to play which part.
- The goal is to bring the poem to life, and bring the sounds of the poem to life.
- If you're going to use narrators to help tell the poem/story, just go with one.
- Students spend one class rehearsing and then they perform.



## BODY ON THE FLOOR ANALYSIS EXERCISE

- Synchronous task or Asynchronous task
- This exercise teaches students how to break down analysis.
- Everyone has a piece of paper. Tell students to divide the page into four boxes.
  - If they don't have paper, that's fine.
- In Box One: Imagine that there is a body of some kind that is dead on the floor. It can be any kind of body. Draw that body.
  - Given current circumstances, you may want to limit the body to monster bodies, or imaginary monster bodies. Move it away from anything real.
- In Box Two: Identify what the body is.
- In Box Three: Describe how the body looks: age, gender, creature status. Is it a zombie? Is it an ant? What is it?
- In Box Four: Please explain why this dead body is on the floor.
- Connect the exercise to analyzing something, specifically a piece of theatre. Explain to students:
  - Box 1 is the outline.
  - Box 2 is saying what something is. It is the lowest level of evaluation.
  - Box 3 is moving up the ladder with a description. We know more information.
  - Box 4 explains the why. Why is this giant ant dead on the floor in my classroom? Actually he was just shedding his skin and he evolves every year. He's not even really dead, just the skin is. And he's going to come back next year and he'll be an even bigger ant.
- Now tie it into one of Goethe's questions when analyzing a piece of art: Was it worth doing? In order to establish the "worth" you need to explain the why. So instead of students just saying "Yes, because it was funny." You have to explain the why.

## SLATE

- Synchronous task
- To slate is the process of introducing yourself before an audition.
- This is also a good exercise to use when talking about life skills - People judge you on first impressions, before you even open your mouth. The Slate moment is just as important as the monologue. It has to be performed clearly, confidently, and you have to present all the necessary information.
- Use the format of "Hi, my name is... Today, I will be performing XX character from XX play". Decide if students will choose their own "character/play" or if you'll give everyone the same one.
- Practice as a group working on confident stance, shoulders back, feet shoulder-width apart, no nervous fingers, et cetera. And the phrase.
- Have students put their heads down to start, raise their head and do their slate.
- To keep everyone else in the class engaged, have them take a piece of paper and put as many numbers on the page as students. Students will assess each slate on a score of 5. 5 means all the information is presented, the student is confident, and clear.
- Students hold up their paper after each slate and show their rating. You could do fingers, but I felt like having it on a piece of paper holds them accountable on a different level.
- It keeps students engaged and it's interesting to see how students rate their peers. And then you can talk about "Okay, the class gave you all a five and I give you a two and here's why."
- It helps students to understand what's necessary for a slate and why it's necessary.

## REMOTE IMPROV

- Synchronous task
- You could have this posted ahead of time or have students do it live in class.
- Give students a monologue, or even just a single line to play with, like "I like pizza." You can even give students a content-less scene and have two students perform.
- Now identify the rules of the game - you have a remote control and when you say certain phrases, the person performing has to act accordingly depending on the phrase: fast forward, rewind, pause, foreign language subtitles. Decide as a class what each of those phrases means.

## TABLEAU PROJECT

- Asynchronous task
- Use at the end of a theatre history unit.
- Students will submit pictures/video to you. (eg: through Flipgrid, Google Classroom, Schoology, upload a PowerPoint or other Slides presentation)
- Students have to create a tableau series using three eras in theatre history.
  - Commedia, Renaissance Ancient Greece
- For younger students, they make three pictures, one for each time period.
- For older students, they have to make three pictures for each time period and include transitions, so not just three isolated pictures. How can they move their body to transition from one still image to another still image with no voice.
- For older students you may want to have them base their tableau on theatre history themes. What are the most important themes from each era?

## SHAKESPEARE IT UP

- Asynchronous task
- Students take a story, folk tale, fairy tale. Something short. If possible have students research tales from another culture.
- Students will take the story and rewrite it to make it sound like Shakespeare. How will they take Shakespeare's language and apply it to a tale like "The Three Little Pigs"?
- Students either submit their rewrite, or if you have a live class, they can perform them.

## FIGHT WITH YOURSELF

- Asynchronous task
- Challenge students to create a scene where they fight with themselves. Record it and submit.
- Make sure you add instructions about no one hurting themselves.
- They should come up with a reason for the fight, why would someone fight themselves, and a resolution.

## KINESTHETIC GREEK THEATRE

- Asynchronous task
- Use this after studying the parts of an Ancient Greek Theatre.
- Students will need a worksheet with all of the parts of the Ancient Greek Theatre.
  - parados, orchestra, skene, etc.
- Students are to come up with an action or movement for each labeled part of the theatre.
  - For example: for the parados they might take three steps forward and swing their arms from back to front.
  - At the same time they do the movement, they say the name of the part.
  - In this way they are creating a living worksheet, by connection action to a part of the theatre.
  - They are taking information they need to know and putting it into their body.
- Students can share their living worksheet in a live class, they can record it and submit, they can do it at home and you can discuss their experience as a class.