Yes - And / Or / Not
Information Literacy and Instruction Through an Improvisational Lens

Jay A. Edwards, University of Oklahoma Libraries
I want to respectfully acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities whose traditional, ancestral, and sovereign lands we live and work on today. Librarians have an important role in providing plentiful resources about America’s rich indigenous heritage and the current contributions of tribal nations.

Please consider visiting or donating to:
First Americans Museum Oklahoma: famok.org
Info Lit and Improv

- Instruction
- Information Literacy
- Applied Improvisation
- Playfulness

Librarian workshops by Kate Dohe (left) and Jill Markgraf (right)
Applied Improvisation

- Low-stakes, skills-focused group activities
- You are not on your own
- You are allowed to make mistakes
- NOT stand-up comedy
  - You don’t have to be clever or funny
- You can say the first thing that comes to mind
  - Respect your teammates
- Observation is a valid form of learning

#libraryimprov
@OU_Libraries
What will you do at the intellectual crossroads of the University of Oklahoma?

Applied Improv (Pre-Pandemic)

New Library Student Assistant Orientation

Librarian Workshop at Tulsa

#libraryimprov
@OU_Libraries
Applied Improv (COVID Edition)

Step 1: Write a word on the white card
(Something to bring to a picnic.)
Step 2: Pass the card to the right
Repeat

For example:
- Sandwiches
- BLANKET
- Basket
- Plates
- Cheese

What will you do at the intellectual crossroads of the University of Oklahoma?
YES, AND

YES: Accept and receive information
AND: Respond and build with new information

For example:

Person A: Let’s go to the movies!
Person B: Yes, and let’s sneak out of the house through the basement.
YES, AND Exercise

- Go around the table
  First person: Say an **item to take to a picnic**
  Next person: “Yes, and” then add another item
  Repeat

#libraryimprov
@OU_Libraries
YES, AND Exercise (COVID Edition)

Step 1: Something to bring to a picnic
Step 2: Pass the card right
Step 3: Something that goes well with the previous item
Step 4: Pass the card

Repeat

For example:
- Waffles
- Syrup
- Basket
- Plates
- Cheese
Word-At-A-Time Sentence

Step 1: Write a word on the GREEN OR YELLOW card
Step 2: Pass the card
Step 3: Write a (grammatically correct) word
Repeat
Step 4: Put a period when the sentence ends. Take the card out of rotation.

For example:
One word at a time!
Skills related to YES, AND

- Acceptance
- Adaptation
- Active Listening
- Avoiding Preconceived Ideas
- Awareness
- Commitment
- Failure Recovery
- Flexibility
- Focus
- Goal setting/resetting
- Making Connections With others Between ideas
- Play
- Respect For each other For their choices
- Support for Each Other
- Trust

#libraryimprov @OU_Libraries
Synonyms Exercise

- Go around the table
- First person says a word
- The next person says a synonym
  Or broader, narrower, or related topic
  To the previous word only
  (Repeat)
Synonyms Exercise (COVID Edition)

Step 1: Write a word on the PURPLE OR PINK card
Step 2: Pass the card
Step 3: Write a synonym
Or broader, narrower, or related topic
To the previous word only
(Repeat)

For example:  Or:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficiency</strong></td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being good at</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#libraryimprov
@OU_Libraries
Divergent & Convergent Thinking Exercise (COVID Edition)

1) A letter of the alphabet
2) First word that starts with that letter
3) Second word that starts with that letter
4) A topic that incorporates those words

For example:

H
HIPPOPOTOMUS
Harm
Human activities that that harm hippopotomuseses
National Resources

The Improv Network
www.theimprovnetwork.org

The Applied Improvisation Network
appliedimprovisation.network/

Library Improv
libraryimprov.blogspot.com

What will you do at the intellectual crossroads of the University of Oklahoma?
Local Resources

- Local small businesses
  Hold workshops, classes and shows

- Check local schools, colleges and universities
  Student groups and theater teachers can be recruited to teach workshops
Board Games!

- Provide opportunities to practice:
  - Situational awareness
  - Flexibility within structure (play within rules)
  - Various levels of interpersonal interaction

- Various venues:
  - Play at home with friends and family
  - Board game cafés
  - Board game programming at libraries

Commonspace Games in Norman
(formerly Loot & XP)

Shuffles in Tulsa

#libraryimprov
@OU_Libraries
Resources by:

Kate Dohe & Erin Pappas
Improv and Libraries
Previous LOEX presenters

R. Keith Sawyer
Improv & Teaching

Tony Stamatoplos (right)
Improv and Libraries
Previous LOEX presenter

Journal of Play in Adulthood
Upcoming special issue, “The Playful Library”
What will you do at the intellectual crossroads of the University of Oklahoma?

Additional Resources:

Reading List:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VymaWcoZ7PtTrmeMOSmWhLSy7LNSp0ihlCwu35Xd8s/edit?usp=sharing

Final Exercise:

- Give 3+ people your card.
  Or re-use an index card
  with your contact/social media info

#libraryimprov
@OU_Libraries
What will you do at the intellectual crossroads of the University of Oklahoma?

Jay A. Edwards
Circulation Supervisor, OU Libraries
Improv Director, Medieval Fair of Norman
MLIS Student, University of Oklahoma
jae@ou.edu