

Marion Cilker Conference for the Arts Education
Workshop: **Name the Monster: Improv Games for Writing**
Presenter: D.J. Zwicker-Sobrepeña (meowpau@sbcglobal.net)

Top Five Rules for Improvisation

Improvisation: words/dialogue are not written down; actors use words and actions to interact with each other to make sense of who they are and what they are doing in a scene with little to no rehearsal time

1. Say Yes-and!

For a story to be built, whether it is short form or long form improvisation, the players have to agree to the basic premise/situation and set-up. The *who*, *what*, and *where* have to develop for a scene to work. Always agree with your partner to move the scene forward.

2. After the “And,” Add new information.

An improvised scene can't move forward or advance unless we add new information. That is why new information is added after the Yes of Yes-and!

3. Don't Block.

The opposite of saying “yes-and” is blocking or denial; saying, “No,” or not going along with the established premise/situation. You cannot say, “No!” or you kill the scene.

4. Avoid Questions.

A form of blocking (in its more subtle form) is asking questions. Questions force our partners to fill in the information or do more work. It is a way of avoiding committing to a choice or a detail. Sometimes questions can be used to add information or tell your partner a direction for the scene *if* you are an advanced player.

5. Establish the Location and Relationship!

Good scenes take place somewhere and at sometime. They do not take place on an empty stage. A location can easily be established in one or two lines. Characters need to establish where they are and who they are in relationship to each other (strangers, brother and sister, mother and daughter, etc.)

OTHER HELPFUL THOUGHTS

- DON'T TRY TO BE FUNNY!
- DON'T BE TOO CHATTY—take turns speaking one line at a time like a tennis match
- FOCUS ON YOUR PARTNER/GROUP AND YOU WILL SHINE MORE!