

Music CD included!

Teaching Underscored!

***Creating Advanced & Imaginative Learning
through Music Improv***

by S. J. McCullough, Psy.D.

In partnership with Wavelength Inc.



Web: www.wavelengthinc.com

Phone: (877) LAUGHS-2

What is Creating Advanced and Imaginative Learning?

Advanced and Imaginative Learning is the process that we observe taking shape when a student is presented with the tools of improvisation in the classroom. Through improvisation, students are working muscles to connect with their material on a personal level. And through this improvisation, the students develop an advanced, more intuitive sense of the material by latching their own creative perspective on to it.

It may have started out as simple as singing the ABC song to learn your alphabet, yet somewhere along the academic curriculum we've lost touch with coordinating our different kinds of intelligences to facilitate learning. Improvisation is the next step to reinvigorating that process. And the end result will always leave the student with a stronger connection to the material and a creative, imaginative muscle for learning new things.

Music Improvisation in the Learning Environment

The Art of Improvisation encompasses many arenas; theatrical uses, corporate think tanks, educational tracks, commercial ad creations, research and design, and many others. And the tools for fostering improvisation also vary quite a bit, from writing and poetry, dance and movement, to art and music.

In the educational arena, Music Improvisation has a particularly strong effectiveness for the students and teacher. Music is a very accessible and culturally familiar form of self expression, particularly among youth. Incorporating Music in the learning environment teaches the students that music can also be used as a means to learn something new – and in fact, many of our first lessons were taught through music. We can go even farther in pointing out how vastly all of the songs we listen to are themselves trying to communicate some new information or perspective, as well as sounding catchy or danceable. From the patriotic and historical lesson embedded in the words of the Star Spangled Banner, to the latest pop-tune speaking of heart-break, music is a form of communicating something to the listener.

Establishing this connection between music and communication is vital in the art of musical improvisation in the classroom. The advanced musical improv exercises of this workbook give the students the task of demonstrating their knowledge of the material through a musical means. From creating a short commercial Theme Song about a subject matter, to imagining how to explain the subject matter through a Blues song, all

uses of musical improvisation in the classroom are designed to give the students a new means of communicating, and thus themselves internalizing, the classroom material.

Before diving into the classroom exercises, let's address some frequently asked questions.

Do I have to be Funny? No. Using music improvisation exercises in the classroom is aimed at advancing your students knowledge, not being a stand-up comedy act. Be yourself and become very familiar with the 5 Great Ideas. Those ideas are your guidelines for successfully implementing the music improv tools, and no jokes are required!

But I can't Sing! How can I teach this? No problem. In fact, it is important that no time is spent focusing on the quality of anyone's singing voice. But singing is different than speaking and it literally fosters a "Freeing of the voice" which also helps to free one's creative mind. The focus should instead remain on giving 100% effort to the exercises, and with full gusto. We relate to singing differently and often stronger than we do to the speaking voice, and that is what matters most.

Do I have to know anything about Music? No. We designed this workbook with the non-musical teacher in mind, and at no time do these exercises require specific music knowledge. All you need to know is how to play a CD in your CD player. The CD provided with this workbook includes all the music you'll need for each of the exercises. But if you are interested in expanding beyond the music provided, there are some helpful ideas and suggestions at the end of this workbook on how to do just that.

How do I maintain my role as teacher when the improvisations make me feel foolish? This is the best question of all and yet it is the hardest one for most to admittedly ask. First, it is important to replace the experience of feeling "foolish" with one of feeling "uncertain". Improv is full of uncertainty because it calls upon unplanned, imaginative responses. The key to acquiring confidence in improvisation is to become familiar and comfortable with that "uncertain" feeling, and to avoid labeling it with self-judgment.

Second to getting comfortable with the element of uncertainty, is practicing and internalizing the 5 Great Ideas we've outlined for improvisation in the classroom. Those guidelines create the foundation for the work we do in improvisation. As a template for fostering creative and imaginative learning, become intimately familiar with their meaning, their purpose, and their usefulness. This is the most important "homework" any teacher can do before beginning the process with their students. And your

confidence and familiarity with those guidelines are what sustains your leadership role as you foster a new kind of learning environment in your classroom with improvisation.

Keys to using the 5 Great Ideas

“Create a Space”

The first step is creating a classroom atmosphere that is safe, playful, and free of judgment. For some, singing in public is a scary thing. We address potential fears by using these “safe space”-creating techniques:

- 1) Create a circle with the students for the initial exercises. This circle eliminates status among the participants and induces a sense of group involvement.
- 2) Emphasize rapid speed. Press the students to give quick gut-responses, especially in the initial exercises, giving them little time to over-think their actions or focus on their fears.
- 3) Role-model acceptance and group encouragement. “Clap it out” is a very common phrase used by workshop teachers to induce group agreement and put a button on the end of each group exercise.
- 4) Allow for nonsensical moments. “Gibberish” and “brain explosions” are common side-effects for new participants. Give permission for the students to stumble and make little sense, or even make up non-existent words in the spirit of keeping up a fast pace and rapid response. These mental speed-bumps will happen less frequently as the students gain confidence in their participation.

Create a Space, exercises*:

“Pass the clap”

“Group Hum”

“Let’s Find the Rhythm” [Cd track 1]

“Word Ball”

* Detailed descriptions of these exercises are found in the Glossary portion of this workbook.

“Take a Risk”

It is important not to linger too long in the “safe zone” of group anonymity. As the students establish a sense of comfort with the initial group exercises, we launch directly into more risk-taking tasks. Here are some key aspects of this next step to keep in mind:

- 1) Begin this process by switching from using yourself as the starting point of the group exercise, to casually selecting other students to begin the pattern. Select an array of students, including the ones showing some difficulties, and use the group to clap for each one in encouragement.
- 2) Allow yourself to stumble. Demonstrating that slight-glimpse into our own humanity is a key way of role modeling self-acceptance when taking a risk. That moment when you too get flustered by the exercise becomes a key memory for the students as they get to observe how you are able to overcome it and try again with joy.
- 3) Review and highlight the challenges of taking a risk. After having the group “Clap-out” the end of their exercise, talk back with them about some of the moments you observed when they were taking a risk. Select both the very successful ones as well as the less-successful ones as they were all creative, innovative and expressive.
- 4) Constantly emphasize speed reacting. This continues to be a key element for inducing a mind-state of creative learning. When students begin to linger in their participation, encourage them to “say anything” and go as quickly as possible. This also gives the students great practice at learning to trust their gut and go with the first thing that comes to their mind.

Take a Risk, exercises:

“Dance Tag” [Cd track 2]

“Show Us How to Get Down!” [Cd track 3]

“Roll Call” [Cd track 4]

“Explore & Heighten”

Building upon the playfulness and energy you have now fostered in your group, this third Idea begins to implement Learning through Improvisation. The exercises used to introduce the students to the importance of “Exploring” and “Heightening” upon a

subject matter works the student's mental coordination, which is needed for advanced creative learning and thought. This process begins with free association. Free association, particularly when it comes to music, becomes a doorway for exploring material and heightening one's knowledge.

Here are some key elements for working the free association muscle to explore and heighten material:

- 1) Trust in the first thing that comes to mind. Having emphasized the importance of speed-reactions in the earlier exercises, we now delve further into tasks that involve making fast verbal connections. Listen carefully for students who are still pre-planning their responses and, without singling them out, emphasize the exercise's goal as getting better and faster at saying the first thing that comes to mind.
- 2) There are no wrong answers! As the students struggle with this fast free association muscle, "Gibberish" and "brain explosions" will creep up again. Reward their willingness to go through the mental struggles and remind them that there are no wrong answers in free association since it is an individualized response.
- 3) Reinvigorate the group support. Each of these exercises requires group involvement supporting the individual participant, and their role is not to be taken lightly. The group motivation and momentum can help the individual participants push over a mental speed bump. And remember to always "Clap it out" at the end of the group exercise as a supportive reward for each other.
- 4) Discuss and share with them different thinking styles. It is very important to acknowledge the difficulty of using this new muscle. Share with your students that their struggles come from genuine differences in thinking styles – visual, verbal, aural, etc., - and that these exercises are designed to help the student better coordinate their thinking styles and express their intelligence.

Explore & Heighten, exercises:

"Hot Spot"

"Seven Things" [Cd track 5]

"Where Has My Finger Been?" [Cd track 6]

“Yes, and...”

The “Yes, and” Idea is the fuel that keeps the imaginative learning muscle going. As your students become more confident in their free association abilities and begin to explore and heighten their verbal connections, “Yes and” exercises shows them how to building upon their own ideas towards a more coherent thought.

“Yes And” is the cornerstone of Improvisation and particularly the kind of improvisational learning that we are inducing. And it is one of the 5 Great Ideas that will always need reviewing and working as the students launch into the musical improvisational tasks. The idea is very simple. Developing the mindset for using it is often trickier. Here are the basics to always keep in mind:

- 1) “Yes” is agreement. “And” is elaboration. Both are needed to bridge an idea into a larger exploration. Focus on the students including both aspects of “yes and” into their responses.
- 2) Listening is key and pre-planning is deadly. The linking of ideas requires the students to listen openly and carefully to the idea presented in front of them. Use yourself to demonstrate how pre-planning your participation, instead of listening and using Yes-And, halts the flow of the ideas and puts a knot in the linking process.
- 3) All participation is equal! Even if you’ve done an amazing job at creating group support and acceptance, this advanced element can still feed into unhealthy group dynamics, particularly for those seeking higher status and popular acceptance. If this begins to unfold in your group, emphasize how the success of these exercises is dependent upon the group working together. As the exercises work their way around the circle, no singular contribution is more important and in fact, it is more often the role of the supportive participant who increases the success of the group.
- 4) Continue to emphasize the practice of free association, group momentum, and gut reactions to this process. Over-thinking is still an undesired reflex in this process, and the best way to conquer that is to eliminate the time to think and move quickly.

Yes And exercises:

“Story”

“Dr. Sings it All” [Cd track 7]

“Madrigal” [Cd track 8]

“Use Imagination”

The final of the 5 Great Ideas is as important to internalize and review as it is deceptively obvious. Using one’s imagination is the giving of permission to think and say the unlikely; the unique; your individual take on the world. It is an aspect of our mental capacities that often comes far easier to the young than to the adults, so it seems. To facilitate the usefulness of one’s imagination toward learning, we include these exercises and demonstrate how one uses imagination to build upon their improvisational learning:

- 1) If you’re not sure about something, make something up! That is the fundamental of using one’s imagination. However, students are often insecure about using their imagination because it increases their sense of feeling incompetent. We bypass that obstacle in improvisation with our guideline of agreement and group acceptance built into the prior exercises. If, for example, a student doesn’t know how to “sound Swedish”, we encourage her to “Make it Up!” and the group as a whole is going to accept her version of what “sounding Swedish” sounds like.
- 2) Group Agreement is Key! When the group embraces each other’s imagination, it can turn a simple contribution into a genius element. These can never be preplanned, and can only be fostered with exploration, heightening, and “yes and” by each member of the group.
- 3) Everyone is good enough! Differences among your participants in how they think, free associate, and work creatively, are all wonderful gifts to the improvisational learning process. The element of self-exposure that comes out of all of these exercises is an opportunity for each student to experience validity in their own style.

Use Imagination, exercises:

“Instruction Manual”

“Story”

“Conducted Theme Song” [Cd tracks 9,10 & 11]

**Highlights to using these Warm Up to Improv exercises
with the 5 Great Ideas**

- Allow it to feel natural and like magic! The focus should be on the development of the improv muscle and not on educating them about these 5 Great Ideas.
- Like education itself, the improv muscle is about discovery! Ask your students to provide the feedback and do their own discovering about what happens when they start to trust in their new improv muscle.
- Make it a habit of using these exercises as regular warm-ups prior to introducing new, more advanced classroom improvisations.

Advanced Material-Related Music Improvisations

Now it is time to challenge your students to combine and demonstrate their knowledge of the classroom material through the art of music improvisation. You can use most of these improvisations in the classroom however there are additional improvisations in this section that can be used as homework assignments as well. You will find that the list of exercises for each of the competencies begin with less music-intensive tasks, and become more musically involved as they go on. Because each classroom develops their own collective skill level, it is important that you challenge your students with those improvisations they can succeed with first. All of the exercises are equally useful and whether your students are only at their best with the less intensive exercises does not take away any of the effectiveness of the work you're doing.

We have grouped this section into the different areas of competencies from which we assess our students' understanding of the material: *Vocabulary terms, Definitions & Concepts, Applicability, and Critique*. Some of these improvisations are simply topic-specific forms of the earlier group exercises. And others are brand new, more advanced exercises. The fact that so many of the improvisations can be used and modified to suit

Teaching Underscored!

the varying types of competencies demonstrate just how versatile improvisation is for creative learning and assessment.

Vocabulary Terms

These improvisations are fast and fun ways of assessing your student's understanding of the terms related to the subject matter. By emphasizing quick responses and unscripted thinking, your students must integrate their knowledge basics into a form of creative expression. This act alone deepens their connectedness to the material and also makes it more apparent where in their knowledge base they are lacking. These exercises are good for the entire classroom to participate in, and when rapid responses are encouraged there is less time for the students to focus on their anxiety or worry of "failure".

Vocabulary Terms exercises:

"Word Ball"

"Seven Things to Know"

"Dr. Lists It All" [Cd track 7]

"Rap a Line" [Cd tracks 13 & 14]

Definitions & Concepts

These improvisations require the students to elaborate in the meaning and context of the classroom material. Many teachers find these exercises very useful as part of their overall review process just prior to an exam. Some of these exercises are best used in groupings of 3 to 5 students at a time.

Definitions & Concepts exercises:

"Where has my (Topic) been?"

"Topical Madrigal" [Cd track 8]

"Dr. Sings All About It" [Cd track 7]

“Conducted Theme Song” [Cd tracks 9, 10 & 11]

Applicability

When we ask our students to relate the subject material to current times and contexts of their lives, we are demonstrating to them the applicability and importance of the subject matter to the here-and-now. And here is where we often get some resistance, particularly from those students who are struggling with the subject matter and become detached from the work.

Incorporating these music improvisations at this stage of the learning process can ignite even the most disengaged student. These exercises are good for the classroom, but they also become useful homework assignments for students to craft songs and expand further on their imaginative learning muscle.

Applicability exercises:

“Conducted Theme Song” [Cd tracks 9, 10 & 11]

“Song In A Box” [Cd track 12]

“Make a Country Connection” [Cd track 15]

“Pop Tune, Pop Topic” [Cd track 16]

Critique

This section is for subject matters where critical thinking and analysis are involved and integrated into the material. These music improvisations lend themselves to expressing an opinion and sharing a point of view. Taking this advanced step, in a musical-improvisation form, is the ultimate leap for students to integrate their grasp of the

material with their creative learning muscle. And often too, these music improvisations can bring the resistant student out of their defensive shell.

Critique exercises:

“Instruction Manual”

“Rap Debate” [Cd track 17]

“Everything is Emo” [Cd track 18]

“Gibberish Opera” [Cd track 19]



Integrating Music and Improv a Step Further

Now that you have acquired an extensive skill-set for creating advanced and imaginative learning with music improv, here are some additional ideas and suggestions to consider bringing into your classroom.

Underscore Your Lesson Plan Begin your classroom with music playing that relates directly to that day’s lesson plan. Even better, end your hour with a listening to a piece of music that highlights the subject matter. Is the Great Depression the topic for the day? Share with your students the kinds of songs that were written during that era with emphasis on what the lyrics are saying.

Yes-And Sales Pitch Nothing can be more effective than fostering in your classroom the positive energy generated by the Yes-And idea. Have your students improvise an on-the-spot sales pitch to the classroom about the subject matter using the continuous Yes-And exercise as they layer on each new idea.

Music Anthology Have your students do research into the kinds of sounds, instruments, and popular songs that are applicable to the subject matter. Could you create an orchestra of bubbling beakers, perhaps? Anything can be possible when their imaginations are brought into play.

Soundtrack of Our Lives Have your students create a mix of current songs they know, to collectively tell a story about something. They must align these songs and their lyrics in a sequence that follows the natural logic of their story. Perhaps they write an essay and then mix an instrumental track of mood music to underscore behind its reading.

Alphabetical Glossary of Exercises

Conducted Theme Song [Cd tracks 9, 10 & 11]

- **How it Works:** This exercise involves the students creating a short Theme Song that describes pertinent elements of the subject matter they are learning in class.
 - a. In a group of four, line up the students to sing one sentence at a time from left-to-right. The teacher remains in front of the group to conduct which student goes next to help them stay with the beat of the music.
 - b. Have the rest of the class make-up a Title of a song that advertises some aspect of the topic in class, e.g., in a Biology class studying fossils, a suitable Theme Song title might be, "We're really old!"
 - c. The CD track plays the intro music, and the first student begins the song by singing the Title that was given.
 - d. The 2nd Student repeats the Title.
 - e. The 3rd student adds a new, invented line that says more about the topic.
 - f. And the 4th student repeats the Title once more.
 - g. The students then take turns singing new lines about the topic in the spirit of getting out useful information the way a T.V. Theme Song might try to sell a product.
 - h. After going down the line three times, the fourth time returns again to the Title of the song. This gives it a Chorus – Verse – Verse – Chorus structure.

Teaching Underscored!

For example, let's look at what might happen for "We're really old!" a Theme Song talking about Fossils (sung in the style of the 1950's commercial music)

Student 1: "We're really old"

Student 2: "We're really old"

Student 3: "We're stuck inside some rocks."

Student 4: "We're really old"

Student 1: "You can find us in creeks"

Student 2: "We are dinosaur bones"

Student 3: "Scientists dig us up."

Student 4: "We are in your backyard"

Student 1: "There are trilobites"

Student 2: "And they're trapped in mud"

Student 3: "They leave imprints in rocks"

Student 4: "You can see them at Museums"

Student 1: "We're really old"

Student 2: "We're really old"

Student 3: "We're stuck inside some rocks!"

Student 4: "We're really old"

Dance Tag [Cd track 2]

- **How it Works:** This exercise involves all the students playing a game of Musical Tag. The students are only allowed to move when they are dancing and moving to the style of music being played. As the music changes styles, the students must change how they dance.
 - a. Students group together in any random formation. They are told they can only move around the classroom when they are dancing to the style of the music on the Cd.
 - b. Start the Cd and randomly select the first "It" person who must try to tag someone else as they dance to the music.
 - c. The Student who "tags" a new person must yell TAG out loud.
 - d. When the music changes styles, the teacher can give examples and encouragements to the students for changing their style of dance.

Dr. Lists it All [Cd track 7] (see also Dr. Sings it All)

- **How it Works:** Using the same music and technique as Dr. Sings It All (see below) you can modify this exercise to have the students review important Vocabulary Terms by singing them one word at a time. In this case, the goal is not to complete sentences, but to review pertinent terms and ideas. The fun of this exercise comes from the randomness and free association of the words that the students recall as they sing.

Dr. Sings it All [Cd track 7]

Teaching Underscored!

- **How it Works:** The exercise has the students create a ballad together by only singing one word at a time.
 - a. Students line up in groups of 6 to 10, singing from left to right just one word at a time.
 - b. Have the rest of the class decide what the topic of this "love ballad" will be about, based on the material being studied in class. For example, in a Modern History class a love ballad about military machinery might be worth exploring. (Typically, the more unusual, the more fun).
 - c. Encourage the students to work together to create complete ideas and whole sentences. No need to worry about song structure or rhyming, just focus on their working together. For example, here is how a Dr. Sings It All might start out with Military Machinery as the subject of this "Dr. Sings It All" ballad:

Student 1: "Tanks..." Student 2: "and..." Student 3: "Helicopters..."
Student 4: "are..." Student 5: "big..." Student 6: "and..."
Student 1: "loud." Etc.,...

Everything is Emo [Cd track 18]

- **How it Works:** This is an exercise meant for the students to take home and create their own lyrics using the music provided. The musical style of Emo is particularly useful for the critique or analytical stage of any classroom review.
 - a. Have the individual student decide what their critique is going to be about. Then have them write a Title to their song based on that critique or point of view. For example, in a Political Science class one such song title and critique might be called "The electoral college is outdated."
 - b. Provide the student with a copy of the Everything is Emo music to take home with them and write their song.
 - c. Based on the Title they've picked, have them write a Chorus that has that Title in it as the first or last line. Then they are free to create the rest of their verses that explains the "why?" of their title.

For example, based on the song title "The electoral college is outdated", a student's song may turn out something similar to this kind of structure that is very sing-able with the music provided.

"The electoral college is outdated"
Chorus: The electoral college is outdated
We should get rid of it
The electoral college is outdated
We don't need it anymore
Verse: Not everybody's vote counts
When their region is divided by delegates
It gives them too much power
Instead of just counting each vote as one
Chorus Repeat

Gibberish Opera [Cd track 19]

- **How it Works:** This exercise is for the very ambitious and brave improvisational class! It involves having a group of students act-out what they have been learning in the classroom to the dramatic style of an Opera.

Teaching Underscored!

- a. Have the classroom decide what this short dramatic opera is going to be about. For example, in a Modern Literature studies class perhaps the students pick “The Great Gatsby” as the subject of this Opera.
- b. Review the important characters needed for this Opera and have the students volunteer playing the various roles.
- c. Instruct the students to only sing in gibberish, and they cannot use real words. It also helps to review with the classroom how Opera singers tend to act and encourage using their full body to convey what is taking place in the scene.

Tip! Before beginning the music, remind them that they must act quickly and condense their story to fit into the two minutes of instrumental opera music provided. Afterwards, discuss with the class what elements were highlighted and what elements were missing. This exercise can be repeated several times, with different groups of students to act out and review all the specifics of the material being discussed in class.

Group Hum

- **How it Works:** This exercise promotes the beginning of group singing and supporting and connecting with each other through music. We start with humming first, and not singing specific words, so that the students can focus on blending their sounds together. Use this exercise as part of your “vocal warm ups” to music improvisation. The Teacher always leads this exercise and picks the song that the group will hum together. Examples of good Group Hum songs are: *Amazing Grace*, *When The Saints Go Marching In*, *Yankee Doodle*, *America The Beautiful*, and *I’ve Been Working on the Rail Road*.

Hot Spot

- **How it Works:** This exercise has the students take a risk and share the spotlight by taking turns singing solo inside a group circle.
 - a. The students stand in a circle and the first person jumps in the middle of the circle and starts singing the words to a popular song they know.
 - b. The students standing in the circle who also know the song sing along, and those who don’t either clap or hum along.
 - c. Based on a word or idea in the song that student #1 has started, another student jumps in the middle and tags-out that person and takes their place starting a new song.
 - d. Everyone switches over to the new song and sings along until someone comes up with a new song that has something in common with that song, and tags that person out to take their place.
 - e. Repeat this pattern making sure the students tag each other out quickly, and everyone gets a chance to sing in the middle.

Instruction Manual

- **How it Works:** This exercise involves the students improvising what might be found in an Instruction manual of a given object.
 - a. Students line up in a group from 3 to 6. A designated conductor sits in the middle facing the group of students and points to the student who should be talking.

Teaching Underscored!

- b. The classroom decides what object this instructional manual is written for. This object should relate to the subject matter being studied at the time.
- c. The person in the middle determines who is talking by pointing to them, and may allow a student to talk for a very short time or very long time. The more they switch up who they are pointing to, particularly in the middle of a sentence, the more the other students must be thinking on their toes to respond and fill in the blanks.
- d. After the first minute of improvised dialogue, have the students use various kinds of chapter headings that you might find in an instruction manual to orient their improvised material. Such headings might include: *Frequently Asked Questions, Warranty, Warning, Trouble Shooting, etc.,*

For example, in a Computer Science classroom about to review their knowledge of computers, they might improvise an Instruction Manual on Computers that looks like this:

Student 1: "Congratulations on getting a new computer. This computer comes with a mouse and a keyboard that..." (conductor points to Student 3)

Student 3: "...that you install in order to tell the computer what you want it to do. If you want to work on a paper, you will want to..." (conductor points to Student 2)

Student 2: "...to click your mouse on a word processing program on your screen." Etc.,

Tip! The teacher should be the first to "conduct" one of the instruction manuals and demonstrate how long to point to a student to allow them to get their ideas out before switching over to another student unexpectedly.

Let's Find the Rhythm [Cd track 1 – live recording of a Wavelength workshop]

- **How it Works:** This warm up exercise orients the students to listening and responding together. After this exercise has been repeated three or four times, the students should be better locked in to each other in rhythm and in song.
 - a. The group stands in a circle with some distance apart so that they may clap hands together by extending their hands out to their sides.
 - b. This exercise always starts with the students clapping their hands out to their sides together, thus creating the clapping sound with the hands of the other students standing on each side of them.
 - c. The pattern of clapping alternates continuously between the clapping their hands outside with their partners with clapping their hands themselves, i.e., clap-out, clap-in, clap-out, clap-in, clap-out, clap-in.
 - d. When it's called for, the "rhythm" of the hands or feet or eyes, is always of the individual persons and not with the persons on their sides. And when it's called for, the students either clap their hands, or stomp their feet or move their hips together in a pattern of three.

Here is how the sing-along portion of this exercise goes. Remember, always begin the rhythm clapping out to your side, then clapping in with your self.

Checkoslovakia, boom-she-boom

Yugoslavia, boom-she-boom

Let's find the rhythm of our hands

[Clap – Clap – Clap]

We've got the rhythm of our hands

[Clap – Clap – Clap]

Let's find the rhythm of our feet

[Stomp – Stomp – Stomp]

Teaching Underscored!

We've got the rhythm of our feet

[Stomp – Stomp – Stomp]

Let's find the rhythm of our eyes

Woo! [everyone looks up the sky as they say Woo!]

We've got the rhythm of our eyes

Woo! [everyone looks up to the sky as they say Woo!]

Let's find the rhythm of our hips

Boom! Boom! Boom! [everyone sways their hips to each side as they say boom]

We've got the rhythm of our hips

Boom! Boom! Boom! [everyone says their hips to each side as they say boom]

Tip! Each time you go through this fun exercise, speed it up a bit. And by the fourth time around, have the students do the exercise without the words!

Madrigal [Cd track 8]

- **How it Works:** In groups of three, the students are provided with a single statement they are to sing-speak in repetition with the music. The students take turns sing-speaking their statement one at a time at first, and then begin to incorporate parts of each other's statement into their own.
 - a. Students line up together in a group of 3.
 - b. Student #1 is given a statement to sing-speak from the classroom. Student #2 is given a different statement to sing, as is Student #3. These statements can be as short as "Just Do It" from Nike, or as long as "Give me liberty or give me death."
 - c. Student #1 begins with the music, to sing-speak their statement 2 to 4 times in rhythm with the Madrigal music (depending on how long a statement they have to say).
 - d. Student #2 immediately follows and sing-speaks their line 2 to 4 times, followed by Student #3.
 - e. After Student #3 has gone, Student #1 goes again but this time incorporates one or two words from one of the other student's statement. Student #2 does the same by changing their own statement to incorporate some of the other's words, as does Student #3.
 - f. The third and last time around, Student #1 changes their statement even more by using words from the other's statements, and they continue again to Student #3.
 - g. After Student #3 has gone their third time, all three students sing-speak whatever made up sentence student #3 ended on.

Here is an example of how a typical Madrigal might go:

Student #1: "Just do it. Just do it. Just do it. Just do it."

Student #2: "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes. Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes."

Student #3: "Give me liberty or give me death. Give me liberty or give me death"

(Round two)

Student #1: "Just shoot their eyes. Just shoot their eyes. Just shoot their eyes. Just shoot their eyes."

Student #2: "Don't shoot until you give me liberty. Don't shoot until you give me liberty."

Student #3: "Give me liberty or shoot their white eyes. Give me liberty or shoot their white eyes."

(Find Round three)

Student #1: "Just do it and give me death. Just do it and give me death"

Student #2: "Don't just shoot until you see their eyes. Don't just shoot until you see their eyes."

Student #3: "Give me their eyes or just do it. Give me their eyes or just do it."

ALL 3 Students: "Give me their eyes, or just do it!"

Tip! Discuss with your classroom how the Madrigal form of music was once a way of making community announcements throughout the town in song. Whether bad news or good news, the Madrigal singers would collectively make announcements in this style, and how much the meaning can change with just one switch of a word is made.

Make a Country Connection [Cd track 15]

- **How it Works:** This is an exercise meant for the students to take home and create their own lyrics using the music provided. The style of Country music is particularly useful for the telling of a story, which is most helpful in reviewing the applicability of a classroom subject.
 - d. Have the individual student decide what kind of application/story their Country song is going to be about.
 - e. Have the student write a Title to their song based on that application. For instance, in a Geology studies class, perhaps the application song could be about carbon dating material, and the title might be "Carbon dating is good for the earth."
 - f. Provide the student with a copy of the "Make A Country Connection" music to take home with them and write their song.
 - g. Based on the Title they've picked, have them write each verse with the title line as the first line, followed by three new lines that explain the "why" to their song. This is called a tag-line song style and is very common in the Country music genre.

For example, based on the song title "Carbon dating is good for the Earth", a student's song may turn out something similar to this kind of structure that is very sing-able with the music provided.

"Carbon dating is good for the Earth"

Verse One

Carbon dating is good for the Earth.

It helps us to know how old things are

When you look at the layers of rock in the ground

You can tell how long each period lasted.

Verse Two:

Carbon dating is good for the Earth

Cause everything degrades eventually

When the earth compresses down, it forms different layers

And each one can be hundreds of years old.

Tip! Encourage the Title of their song to be a simple condensed idea and do not worry about any kind of rhyming. What is more important is that the student is able to demonstrate their grasp of the material in this creative and new way. Encourage them to be as detailed and specific as they can be in their Verses to stretch their imagination.

Pass the Clap

Teaching Underscored!

- **How it Works:** This warm up improvisational exercise gets the students to focus and begin to unite together in rhythm.
 - a. Have all students stand around in a circle. Designate one person to start the clap. (Sometimes it's best for the teacher to start the first round)
 - b. The first person turns to either the person on their right, or left, and facing each other they try to clap their own hands simultaneously together.
 - c. That next person turns to the person next to them to "pass the clap" as those two try clapping their own hands simultaneously together.
 - d. Continue around the circle many times. To change the direction of the clap, simply turn back to the person who gave you the clap and give it back to them.

Tip! Your students will have a tendency to speed up and get lost. Start the Clap at a reasonable pace and direct them to begin going faster once they've been able to successfully pass the clap around in a smooth fashion.

Pop Tune, Pop Topic [Cd track 16]

- **How it Works:** This is an exercise meant for the students to take home and create their own lyrics using the music provided. The style of Pop music is particularly useful for describing how to apply information they've learned in class.
 - h. Have the individual student decide what their Pop song is going to be about, focusing on how to apply their knowledge from class.
 - i. Have the student write a Title to their song based on that application. For instance, in a Human Development class, perhaps their song could be about applying their knowledge of a healthy diet, and the Title might be something like, "The Food Pyramid Rocks!"
 - j. Provide the student with a copy of the "Pop Tune, Pop Topic" music to take home with them and write their song.
 - k. Based on the Title they've picked, have them write each verse with the title line as the last line in each four line verse. This is also called a last-line tag-line song style and is very common in the Pop music genre.

For example, based on the song title "The Food Pyramid Rocks", a student's song may turn out something similar to this kind of structure that is very sing-able with the music provided.

"The Food Pyramid Rocks!"

Verse One

To get the fiber you need

You should eat lots of whole grain

Like bread, rice, cereal and pasta

Oh, The Food Pyramid Rocks!

Verse Two

You also need lots of Fruit

They are better when they are fresh

Two to four servings a day

Oh, The Food Pyramid really Rocks!

Rap a Line [Cd track 13 & 14]

- **How it Works:** This is an ambitious exercise for those who are particularly good at rhythm and rhyme. This is one of only two exercises in this workbook that includes rhyming in the

Teaching Underscored!

improvisations. We have found that there is a sub-set of students who excel well in putting together rhyme and rap to express their ideas, and for that reason we include this exercise.

- Line up the willing “raps” in groups of 4 to 8, with the Rap Line starting from left-to-right.
- The students are instructed to create a rap line that includes the text or vocabulary being reviewed in class. The classroom may also simply pick a topic for which the Rap A Line group is to rap about, using rhyme to set up their partners down the line.
- Student #1 starts with one line of a Rap verse.
- Student #2 improvises a line that ends on a word that rhymes with Student #1
- Student #2 then improvises a new line that ends with a new word for Student #3 to rhyme.
- Repeat the pattern down the line – creating an A-A, B-B, C-C rhyme structure.

Here is an example of a typical Rap line that might be created in an early Chemistry Studies course:

Student #1: “Chemistry is the study of Matter...”

Student #2: “If I eat lots of it, I might get fatter.

“We learn how different things react...”

Student #3: “And how the elements might impact.

“Like when a chemical change occurs...”

Student #4: “With my beaker stick I stirs.

Etc.,...

Tip! A really neat way to prepare for this exercise is to have the students first come up with a list of the vocabulary words and terms they learned in class, paired with a list of words that rhyme with those new terms. This is the only time in an improvisational exercise when a little pre-planning can be useful because it helps the students think ahead of to what words they might use to rhyme in their rap.

Rap Debate [Cd track 17]

- How it Works:** This exercise is another ambitious and advanced improvisation structured for the students to pick a pro vs. con point of view about the subject matter, and take turns rapping about it.
 - Divide the class in two, with those on the pro side (or Cool side) and those on the con side (or Lame side) of the given classroom subject matter.
 - Teach the class the group Rap Line that they use to Rap between each verse, which has the subject matter in it. The Rap Line always goes, “Oh (topic) you’re so Cool (or Lame).” So for instance, if the subject matter is U.S. Presidents and the class just completed a chapter on John Adams, the Rap Line tag will go, “Oh John Adams, you’re so Cool” for those on the Pro side, and “Oh John Adams, you’re so Lame” for those on the Con side.
 - Each side gets a turn, alternating back and forth. A student from each side will step out and take a turn rapping two lines – with the Rap line tag line going in between their two lines. This creates the following easy structure to follow:

Pro Group Rap Line: “Oh (topic) you’re so cool”
Pro Student#1: “(Rap’s a solo line in this slot.)”
Pro Group Rap Line: “Oh (topic) you’re so cool.”
Pro Student #1: “(Rap’s their second line in this slot – which rhymes with their first line.)”
*For example: The topic is John Adams
(Pro group goes first)*

Teaching Underscored!

*Pro Group Raps: "Oh John Adams, you're so cool."
Pro Student #1: "You're commitment was to never fail"
Pro Group Raps: "Oh John Adams, you're so cool."
Pro Student #1: "And you were married to sweet Abigail."
Con Group Raps: "Oh John Adams, you're so lame."
Con Student #1: "You spent so much time in France."
Con Group Raps: "Oh John Adams, you're so lame."
Con Student #1: "You let slavery advance."*

Tip! This exercise can become very addicting and fun for the students. It can be useful before hand to have the students review the pertinent terms, ideas, and vocabulary words along with pairing them up with words that rhyme, to assist in the Rap-song creation.

Roll Call [Cd track 4 – live Wavelength workshop recording]

- **How it Works:** This warm exercise encourages group focus and singing along together, as well as taking individual risks for the students to step out and call out a verse.
 - a. The entire classroom can take part in this exercise. The group cheer starts the following way: *"Sham-boo-ya, Sham-boo-ya, Sham-boo-ya Roll Call!"* sung twice between each roll call student.
 - b. The first student steps out and does a roll call of four lines, starting with their name. The group supports their roll call with a "Yeah" cheer at the end of each line.
 - c. After the fourth and last line of the student's cheer, the group responds with a final "Roll Call" cheer and then the pattern starts over again.

For example, a group Roll Call cheer might go like this:

*Group Sings: "Sham-boo-ya. Sham-boo-ya. Sham-boo-ya, Roll Call!"
"Sham-boo-ya. Sham-boo-ya. Sham-boo-ya, Roll Call!"*

Student A steps out: "My name is Sara."

Group response: "Yeah."

Student A continues: "I like this class."

Group response: "Yeah."

Student A continues: "Cause Mrs. Parker"

Group response: "Yeah."

Student A's last line: "Is really cool"

Group Response: "Roll Call!"

Group starts the pattern over again.

Tip! The focus is on group involvement and creating an environment good for taking a risk as the students step out to do their lines. Do not worry about any kind of rhyming!

Seven Things [Cd track 5 – live Wavelength workshop recording]

- **How it Works:** This warm up improvisational exercise gets the students in the mindset of thinking quickly and creatively by coming up with seven quick answers, or "things" in response to the given topic.
 - a. The students stand in a circle and go around clockwise. The teacher begins this exercise by turning to the person on their left and giving them their "Seven Things" topic. Examples of such a topic might be as specific as, "Name seven things you carry in your backpack", or as creatively broad as "Name seven new Jello flavors not invented yet."

Teaching Underscored!

- b. The student then gives their seven answers, as quickly as possible, while the rest of the group count them off.
- c. After they list their Seven Things, the student turns to their next partner and gives them a whole new category.

Tip! Encourage fast and uncensored thinking. Let the students make up gibberish words if they have to in order to keep up with the group pace of counting off all seven of their answers. Typically the first two or three come easy, and then they begin to “think too hard” for their answers. This is a great exercise to incorporate in your regular warm up improvisations to stretch and build upon that improvisational thinking muscle.

Seven Things to Know (see Seven Things above)

- **How it Works:** Simply modify the Seven Things game into specific categories relevant to the subject matter being studied.

Show Us How to Get Down! [Cd track 3 – live Wavelength workshop recording]

- **How it Works:** This improvisational warm up encourages group support and risk taking. In a cheer format, each individual student is named and encouraged to improvise a dance move that the rest of the group then copies.
 - a. Beginning with the teacher as the initiator, the teacher names the first student called out in the cheer followed by the group repeating that name: “Hey (student)”.
 - b. The named student also has cheer pattern to follow (see below). First they repeat with a “Hey What?” reply, followed by “no way”, and “okay” to the group’s cheer request.
 - c. As the group then spells out the word “Down” the designated student makes up a dance move for the group to copy. The group then repeats the spelling of “Down” and copies that dance move at the same time.
 - d. After that student has improvised their dance move, it is their turn to call out the next student.

The cheer goes as follows:

Teacher: “Hey Jenny.”

Jenny responds: “Hey what?”

Group repeats: “Hey Jenny.”

Jenny responds: “Hey what?”

Group replies: “Show us how to get down.”

Jenny replies: “No Way.”

Group: “Show us how to get down”

Jenny: “Okay”

[Jenny invents a dance move] Group sings: “D – O – W – N. That’s the way to get down”

[Everyone then copies Jenny’s dance move as they sing] “D – O – W – N. That’s the way to get down.”

Jenny starts the next round: “Hey Jackson”

Jackson replies: “Hey what?”

Group responds: “Hey Jackson”

Etc.,...

Song in a Box! [Cd track 12]

Teaching Underscored!

- **How it Works**
 - a. Students are given small slips of paper (4 to 6) and told to write down key vocabulary words related to the classroom subject matter on each single sheet.
 - b. Those slips of paper are collected and put into a box small.
 - c. Three students participate in this exercise together. As the music begins, the first student pulls out one of the pieces of paper and must use that Vocabulary word as the starting word to a made up song lyric.
 - d. Staying with the rhythm of the music, they continue the pattern of taking turns pulling out the vocabulary terms and singing just one-line with that word being the starting point.

Story

- **How it Works:** Using a conductor to point to which student has a turn speaking, the students collectively improvise a made-up story together.
 - a. A group of 5 to 8 students stand together with the conductor sitting in front of them, facing them.
 - b. The classroom provides a title for this story. Each student takes a turn creating the story while the conductor decides who is going next.

For example, in a Health Science classroom the students might improvise a story with the title "Your Body is under attack"

Conductor points to student #2 to begin; "You're body is under attack by viruses and germs and bugs everyday..."

Conductor then points to student #3: "And they can be found in your food or on the things you touch around you, like the kitchen counter or the door handle."

Conduct then points to student #1: "Yes, and when you're body fights off these viruses it can sometimes cause a fever or an upset stomach."

Etc.,...

Tip! The emphasis of this exercise is to practice the "yes and" muscle. If the students are struggling with creating a story together, you can have them practice using the words "yes, and..." every time they are pointed towards for improvising the next line.

Topical Madrigal [Cd track 8]

- **How it Works:** This is a modified version of "Madrigal", however the statements provided to the three performers related specifically to the topic being reviewed in class. The rest of the exercise proceeds exactly as Madrigal.

Vocabulary Word Ball

- **How it Works:** This is a modified version of the warm-up exercise "Word Ball". In this modified version the students are only allowed to toss around words related specifically to the topic of the classroom. This exercise is good for when the students have had to adapt to learning a dozen or more new terms and words in the classroom.

Tip! Try to discourage any repetition of words while still emphasizing speed. This will very quickly reveal to the teacher which of the new terms and ideas have been well incorporated in to the student's knowledge, and which haven't.

Where Has My Finger Been? [Cd track 6]

- **How it Works:** This exercise has the students improvise three simple lines of dialogue using their fingers as the made up characters.
 - a. Standing in a circle in groups between 6 and 10, the students begin the exercise by singing the opening group chant together: *"Where has my finger been? I said, where has my finger been? – Where has my finger been? I said, where as my finger been?"*
 - b. The teacher then points their fingers to a designated student and names a location where their finger-characters are for the improvisation. These locations can be as specific or as general as you desire; from "the inside your eardrum" to "landing on Mars".
 - d. The student who was pointed to must improvise three lines of dialogue between their finger's characters based on the location they were given. When their three lines of dialogue are done, the group completes the exercise by saying together, *"And that's where my finger's been."*
 - e. The group starts the beginning chant over again and the student who just improvised their lines is the one who then points to a different student and gives them a new location to improvise their lines from.

For example, the teacher may start this exercise by giving the first student the location, "in a café' in Paris".

Student A (in a funny French accent) may improvise these lines between their finger-characters:

"Ooo I am so happy to see the Eifel tower."

"Me too, It is one of the tallest structures in the city."

"Yes, and I will go up there and spit on the people below."

The rest of the group, along with the student will then say together:

"And that's where my finger's been!"

Tip! This warm up exercise works best when the student's dialogue is oriented around statements and not questions between the characters. Encourage stretching their imaginations with the locations they give each other.

Where has my (Topic) been?

- **How it Works:** This exercise is a modified version of "Where Has My Finger Been?" (see above). Only in this version, the three lines of dialogue that the students improvise with their fingers must relate specifically to the classroom subject. That also means the "location" that the students give each other for improvising their dialogue should relate specifically to the topic being reviewed.

Word Ball

- **How it Works:** This exercise gets the students thinking fast and on their feet. Use this exercise as part of your warm-up to improvisation.

Teaching Underscored!

- a. All students stand in a circle and take turns tossing around an “invisible” ball shaped big and much like a beach ball.
- b. The teacher begins the exercise by saying a word while they toss this invisible word ball to another student in the circle,
- c. The student “catching” this invisible ball must free-associate a word having to do with the first word as they toss the ball to another person in the circle.

For example, the teacher may start the Word Ball by tossing the ball to Student A and saying “Cat”. Student A then associates to that word and says the word “Dog” as they toss the ball to Student B. Student B may associate and say “Bark” as they toss the ball to Student C and so on.

Tip! Emphasize speed of responding to eliminate the temptation to preplan their response. The faster the word ball gets the around the group, the more the students begin to trust in their gut response and learn to listen openly to what is happening around them.

CD Music Tracks List

Track number	Music Improv Exercise
1	"Let's Find the Rhythm!" (live Wavelength workshop recording)
2	"Dance Tag"
3	"Show Us How to Get Down!" (live Wavelength workshop recording)
4	"Roll Call" (live Wavelength workshop recording)
5	"Seven Things" (live Wavelength workshop recording)
6	"Where Has My Finger Been?" (live Wavelength workshop recording)
7	"Dr. Sings It All"
8	"Madrigal" also to be used for "Topical Madrigal"
9	"Conducted Theme Song" in the style of 1950's commercial
10	"Conducted Theme Song" in the style of a 1970's commercial
11	"Conducted Theme Song" in the style of a modern commercial
12	"Song in a Box"
13	"Rap A Line" in the style of Old School Rap music
14	"Rap A Line" in the style of modern Hip-Hop music
15	"Make a Country Connection"
16	"Pop Tune, Pop Topic"
17	"Rap Debate"
18	"Everything is Emo"
19	"Gibberish Opera"

Our deepest fear is not that we're inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

Our playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were all meant to shine as children do.

It's not just in some of us it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others.

Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Speech