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Unit 3 – Practical activities for integration

Chapter 1 - Creating and running a group-class: facilitating empathy

Activities:

The rules and games of improvisation - Activity

1	
TARGET GROUPS	Appropriate for all types of target groups. Suitable for teenage students.
TITLE	THE RULES AND GAMES OF IMPROVISATION
RUNNING TIME	1 h 30 min per meeting. At the end of a school term, the improv group can create a small semi-improvised performance for the rest of the school. Semi-improvised could mean that each member chooses a certain character type and builds on its features during the entire duration of the drama workshop sessions.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Particularly important is also the improved empathy and understanding of others and the broadened perspectives and increased confidence and trust within the group, because each participant has had a chance for self-expression without the risk of being ridiculed or made to look bad or improper due to judgement or prejudice. Within the CULPEER context these exercises can be used for attaining the following key competences: <i>Communicating in a mother tongue:</i> searching for and reading materials about improvisation theatre will broaden the active vocabulary and the implementation of the improvisation games will stimulate the ability to express thoughts, feelings,



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facts and opinions orally.

Communicating in a foreign language: reading materials and watching videos in English for example and then practicing improvisation in a foreign language would improve your paraphrasing, interpreting or translating skills as well as your intercultural understanding.

Digital competence: confident and critical usage of information and communications technology in relation with the need to retrieve and exchange various digitalized pieces of information on improvisation theatre.

Learning to learn: contribution to the ability to organize one's learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in the improvisation group. Improved motivation and confidence in one's abilities to learn new things and to use the knowledge in practice.

Social and civic competences: whenever the topic on the table is related to social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation, theatre can be particularly effective for building and activating this type of competence, especially in the domain of improving one's interpersonal and intercultural competences, equipping individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, as well as solve conflicts where necessary. Improvisation is usually humorous, which makes it particularly useful for neutralizing negative attitudes. It helps people uplift their awareness about their inner feelings and share their uniqueness in a safe environment. Improvisation intends for people to relax and feel comfortable within a community, working together, because in improvisation there are



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	<p>no wrong moves or decisions.</p> <p><i>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:</i> theatre has ethical values at its base and unlocks the ability to turn ideas into action and to seize opportunities. Lack of initiative and entrepreneurship is sometimes due to lack of self-confidence, which improvisation can easily neutralize – being accepted and embraced by the group, knowing that the aims of the others are to make you feel and look better, increases self-confidence; so does the chance to present yourself and be heard; the achievements of the group as a whole certainly increases the self-confidence of its members.</p> <p><i>Cultural awareness and expression:</i> following the rules of improvisation, participants will develop the ability to appreciate the creative importance of ideas, experiences and emotions as well as to put practice culture. Theatre increases the empathy and the feeling of trust and confidence within the group and this supports the opening towards the others, because in these exercises the participants get rid of the ego: it is no longer “my idea” and “your idea”, but rather “the first idea, the second idea, the third idea and so on” and people start thinking not about the “shoulds”, but about the “coulds”, which immensely increases productivity.</p>
<p>MATERIALS</p>	<p>The activities only require a hall/room, which can accommodate the participants and secure their comfort and enough space for each of them. The selected young people to lead the workshops should be initially trained, if possible by professional actors/improvisers and presented with all the reading and video materials in order to prepare for the peer learning process. Several weeks for preparation of the two are necessary. The common group activities can follow after and have a weekly regularity.</p>



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<p>PREPARATION</p>	<p>The facilitators, if they are not experienced in the art of theatre, should start by reading for example "Improvisation for the theatre" by Viola Spolin or undertake an improvisation course to get ready. It would also be useful to go through the videos and Reading materials listed in "resources" underneath.</p> <p>Improvisation requires a flexible mindset, which requires time and a lot of exercising. The best case scenario for the beginning of these types of activities would involve professional improvisation actors.</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>The exercises included here are suitable for all ages and the groups should/could involve students in common activities.</p> <p>The optimal group size is 12-15 participants in one session.</p> <p>Identify one or two students, who are interested in theatre and give them information about the possibilities of improvisation theatre and the games they could play with the group they form.</p> <p>Give them links and further reading materials – see the bottom of this file.</p> <p>Improvisation is acting (in theatre or in life in general) without preparation. Responding to the specific conditions of the environment and the inner feelings of the participants.</p> <p>The rules, which improvisers follow, universally applicable in everyday communication, are the following:</p> <p>(1) Be connected with each other. We need bonds and understanding in order to be successful members of society. Quite similarly, an <i>impro</i> group needs to be connected, all members being on the same page</p>



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at all times.

(2) Listen to each other! Which means not to focus on our own responses and barely hear 50% of what the other has to say, but to focus on the message coming from the other side, even if this would mean taking longer to respond. (**GAME** – organize a dialogue, in which each next speaker has to start his/her line with the letter, with which the last word of the line of the speaker before him/her ended) Listening is readiness and will to change! If our mind is already made up about something, we are not really listening. We are just waiting for the other side to say what they have to say.

(3) Use "Yes, and ..."!

GAME – organize a scene or a group discussion, in which each next speaker needs to say "yes" and then continue with something they add.

EXAMPLE:

A: This morning my alarm did not go off and I was really late for work.

B: Yes, and probably your boss was mad at you.

A: Yes, and he gave me a handful of extra tasks and is requiring me to come and work on Saturday.

B: Yes, and your wife now will probably be angry with you, because you will not be able to take her to that matinee you were planning.

A: Yes, and I expect she will not speak to me for a whole week and we have so many things to figure out for my mother's visit at the end of the month

And so on and so on.

Saying "no" is forbidden in improvisation theatre,



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because NO stops progress and kills the idea. Even if we do not want to do something or approve of something, we need to be able to find a way to say "yes" to the person and "no" to the idea/proposal. „I would very much like to spend the weekend with you, but I feel so tired and bruised from my last bike ride ... let us try and figure out a less straining activity, which we could do together.“ Just a YES is not enough however. We also need the AND, because this is the contribution, which creates something bigger and different from what each one of us would have created on his/her own.

(4) Be present in the respective space and time with body and soul.

(5) Not focus on the self only, trying to look good, but focus on helping the others look good.

(6) Be flexible in order to react to unexpected changes and events, which disagree with certain preliminary fixations we may have developed on how things should have developed or evolved.

GAME - Divide into couples and build scenes. Player A decides about something and starts the scene. Player B, who has absolutely no idea what A was thinking about, has to respond to the improvisation without breaking the logic of what player A is starting to build. Have the students discuss their ideas afterwards.

GAME - Divide into couples that stare at each for 20 seconds. Then each couple turns back to back and each participant makes 3 major changes in his/her look – tie the hair back or let it loose, roll up a sleeve, take off a shoe, whatever ... Then the couple faces each other again and they need to spot and list the



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three changes the other player has made. This is an excellent game for making the other feel good – because you noticed everything about them and you were able to list their change decisions.

Resources:

Reading material and a huge collection of improvisation games - <http://improvencyclopedia.org/>

Videos on improvisation theatre

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3TsyT_EDBc - "The art of improvisation | Rapid Fire Theatre | TEDxEdmonton." This talk was given at a local TEDx event, produced independently of the TED Conferences. This performance was entirely unscripted, and unfolded before the eyes of our audience. With acoustic musical accompaniment and live painting on stage, our improvisers tell a story of love, loss and mayonnaise.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDSP8wYIMzY> - "Ten Ways to Practice Improvisation Acting Skills : Theater Lessons"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUO-pWJ0riQ> - "TEDxVictoria - Dave Morris: The Way of Improvisation." Improviser and storyteller Dave Morris teaches you 7 steps to improvising and how they apply to life in "The Way of Improvisation." Filmed at TEDxVictoria on November 19 2011

<http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/videos/acting-workshop-with-kevin-spacey-improvisation> - Improvisation workshop led by Kevin Spacey

<https://vimeo.com/tag:improvisation> - Videos on



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	<p>improvisation</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=054BUa3Z0os - How to practice improv with the "Bucket" game. Learn how to play improv games to practice acting skills in this free video on theatre and performance. Expert: Matthew Milo. Watch other videos from the same improv theatre expert.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyxHuidRIpk - Jennifer Hunter, a faculty member of Lake Superior State University, explores how we can use improvisational comedy everyday to achieve a greater sense of self. Published on Mar 30, 2015</p>
<p>ROLE OF THE TEACHER</p>	<p>The teacher rarely is also an improvisation master. He or she should therefore identify and involve professional actor/s who can then work with a group of lead students, who could afterwards train and prepare others and shape up an improvisation group.</p>
<p>POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM</p>	<p>Refusal for participation. If the group is not sufficiently well bonded, team building and ice-breaking exercises should be used before the start of improv activities.</p> <p>Hardship in letting one's own ideas mingle successfully with other people's ideas. Play improve videos to the participants in the workshop. Demonstrate how others do it and make it perfectly clear that only "no" is wrong in improvisation.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK TOOL</p>	<p>Always ask questions after the activities, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you feel during the activities – try to use just a few words to describe this? - What did you like best? - Was there anything you disliked about the activities? - If you could change anything, what would that



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2	
TARGET GROUPS	Early childhood, primary school
TITLE	Labelling feelings
RUNNING TIME	Free
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	<p>The activity aims in developing and teaching empathy to students, as they learn how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting bullied might feel • To recognise when a child is getting bullied • To help a child that might be bullied • To prepare themselves
MATERIALS	No specific material needed.
PREPARATION	<p>Study the process and questions to be asked.</p> <p>Activity extracted and can be found at the following url: http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/8-empathy-activities</p>
IMPLEMENTATION	<p>Introduction: Labeling Feelings</p> <p>Ask the children to describe and label how they might feel in these three different bullying situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they saw someone being bullied • If they were being bullied themselves • If they bullied someone <p>Explain that bullying can lead to strong feelings, such as anger, frustration, and fear. While it's okay to feel</p>



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these feelings, it's never okay to react by doing violent things, such as intentionally hurting someone. Say that if we all work together to prevent and stop bullying, no one in our group will ever need to experience these feelings as a result of bullying.

Activity: Different and Similar

Discuss the many ways that children are different from one another. Prompt them with examples, if needed.

- Some children are big, and others are small.
- Some children run fast, and others run slowly.
- Some children like to play with blocks, and others like to draw pictures.

Ask, "What would our group be like if we were all the same?"

Elicit that while at first it might be fun, since we'd all agree on everything, eventually it would get boring, since we would never try anything new, every race would end in a tie, etc. Explain how the differences among us make our group stronger, more interesting, and better able to do different things. Discuss the fact that bullies may bully other children simply because they are different—they try to make differences seem like bad things or weaknesses, rather than the strengths they are.

Now discuss the many ways children are similar to one another. For example: All children eat, sleep, grow, and have feelings. And, most importantly, all children feel hurt when they are bullied.

Summarize by explaining that we should all agree to appreciate our differences, recognize that no one likes to be bullied, and never bully someone simply



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	<p>because he or she is different.</p> <p>Activity 2: Modeling Helpfulness</p> <p>Discuss the ways that bullying behavior leads both the child who bullies and the child who is bullied to disrespect each other and feel like enemies, rather than friends. Then use pictures, stories, puppets, or other concrete props to model examples of the many ways that children and adults can show that they care about other's feelings and can help each other. Discuss how caring behaviors make both the giver and the receiver feel happy and good.</p>
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	The teacher leads the discussion by asking the questions mentioned above.
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	No specific risks are envisaged.
FEEDBACK TOOL	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you enjoy most during this process? - What was surprising for you? - What did you appreciate most about what others did? - What did you discover?

3	
TARGET GROUPS	Early childhood, primary school
TITLE	Help each other feel better
RUNNING TIME	Free
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	The activity aims in developing and teaching empathy



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	<p>to students, as they learn how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting bullied might feel • To recognise when a child is getting bullied • To help a child that might be bullied • To prepare themselves
MATERIALS	No specific material needed.
PREPARATION	<p>Study the process and questions to be asked.</p> <p>Activity extracted and can be found at the following url: http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/8-empathy-activities</p>
IMPLEMENTATION	<p>First, use these questions to discuss with the group what children can do to help others feel better:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you know how someone else feels? • How can we recognize when another child is feeling bad or left out? • How can we cheer up children who feel bad and help them feel better? <p>Next, use role-playing to help children practice recognizing a child who is feeling hurt and helping the child feel better:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the group divide into pairs. • Ask one child in each pair to pretend that he or she has been bullied and feels bad, while the other child pretends to be a bystander who tries various ways to make the bullied child feel better. • Have the pairs of children switch roles and repeat the activity. • Discuss with the group how the bystanders



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	could tell that the bullied child was feeling hurt and how the bystanders made the bullied child feel better.
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	The teacher leads the discussion by asking the questions mentioned above.
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	No specific risks are envisaged.
FEEDBACK TOOL	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you enjoy most during this process? - What was surprising for you? - What did you appreciate most about what others did? - What did you discover?

4	
TARGET GROUPS	Early childhood, primary school
TITLE	Acts of kindness
RUNNING TIME	Free
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	<p>The activity aims in developing and teaching empathy to students, as they learn how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting bullied might feel • To recognise when a child is getting bullied • To help a child that might be bullied • To prepare themselves
MATERIALS	No specific material needed.
PREPARATION	<p>Study the process and questions to be asked.</p> <p>Activity extracted and can be found at the following</p>



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	<p>url: http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/8-empathy-activities</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>Discuss how an act of kindness is the opposite of bullying because it helps another person feel <i>good</i> instead of <i>bad</i>—it <i>gives</i> a person a good feeling rather than <i>takes away</i> a good feeling. Ask children to describe one nice thing they did for someone else, how it made the other person feel, and how it made them feel. Have each child plan one act of kindness that he or she will do that day for someone else in the group.</p> <p>At the end of the day, have children report on their acts of kindness. Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did this act of kindness make you feel? • How did the person receiving the kindness feel? (You could ask the giver for his or her perceptions, then have the recipient confirm whether those perceptions are accurate.) • How do you think you would feel if you had done an act of bullying, rather than an act of kindness? <p>Conclude the activity by pointing out that doing an act of kindness is not only a great thing to do for someone else, it makes <i>you</i> feel good, too!</p>
<p>ROLE OF THE TEACHER</p>	<p>The teacher leads the discussion by asking the questions mentioned above.</p>
<p>POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM</p>	<p>No specific risks are envisaged.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK TOOL</p>	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you enjoy most during this process? - What was surprising for you? - What did you appreciate most about what others



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	<p>did? - What did you discover?</p>
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5	
TARGET GROUPS	Early childhood, primary school
TITLE	The Golden Rule
RUNNING TIME	Free
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	<p>The activity aims in developing and teaching empathy to students, as they learn how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting bullied might feel • To recognise when a child is getting bullied • To help a child that might be bullied • To prepare themselves
MATERIALS	No specific material needed.
PREPARATION	<p>Study the process and questions to be asked.</p> <p>Activity extracted and can be found at the following url: http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/8-empathy-activities</p>
IMPLEMENTATION	<p>Ask the children if they've heard of the <i>Golden Rule</i>: "Do to others as you would want them to do to you." Point out that this rule could also be phrased as "Don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you." Ask them if children who bully are caring about other children's feelings and treating other children the way they themselves want to be treated. Discuss examples of bullying-related things they would not want other children to do to them and</p>



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	<p>why they would not do those things to others. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wouldn't want someone to say I'm stupid, so I won't say "You're stupid" to anyone else. • I wouldn't want someone to pull my hair, so I won't pull anyone else's hair. • I wouldn't want someone to say mean things about me, so I won't say mean things about anyone else. <p>Then discuss things that they would like another child to do for them and that they might do for another child in return. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like someone to invite me to play, so I will invite someone to play. • I'd like someone to tell me that I drew a great picture, so I will tell someone that he or she drew a great picture. <p>End the activity by reminding the group to treat other children the way they would want to be treated.</p>
<p>ROLE OF THE TEACHER</p>	<p>The teacher leads the discussion by asking the questions mentioned above.</p>
<p>POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM</p>	<p>No specific risks are envisaged.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK TOOL</p>	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you enjoy most during this process? - What was surprising for you? - What did you appreciate most about what others did? - What did you discover?



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6	
TARGET GROUPS	15-25 years old
TITLE	Unboxing people
RUNNING TIME	15-30 min (depending on the number of categories you decide to choose)
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	The activity aims in developing and teaching empathy to students, as they learn how to see their mates as a combination of facets and feeling and not by labeling them into one single box. It could be also possible to involve a higher number of students trying to think beyond the class group. Take into consideration using a big room to be in.
MATERIALS	No specific material needed.
PREPARATION	<p>Study the process and questions to be asked in order to make students feel at ease and to give them their time to step out and mix with the other students.</p> <p>The exercise is based on the promo for the Danish TV2 titled All That We Share: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc</p>
IMPLEMENTATION	<p>Invite the students to stand in groups according to their nationality. Each group in its own area of the venue. After the students have recognized each other in all groups, as facilitator, express a concept like "It's easy to put people in boxes. There is us and there's them, the high earners and those just getting by. Those we trust and those we try to avoid. There are those we share something with and those we don't share anything with". Give them to time to think about the meaning of your words. Now tell them that you are going to ask them questions and hoping that they would answer honestly even though some of the questions could be a bit personal.</p>



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The exercise then starts: ask the students to step forward into a middle area of the venue if they belong to a 'different group', for example if they are 'the class clown'. Give them time to reach the new-group area and recognize each others. Thank them for their courage and their honesty and ask those who have moved to come back to their origin group.

Now ask the students to step forward (into the same middle area) if they 'like pop music' and - again - give them time to recognize each others.

Repeat the same approach for other "categories" such as:

- those who play an instrument
- those from the countryside
- those who have never seen a cow
- those whose parents are still together
- those who have been bullied
- those who have bullied others
- those who like to do sports
- those who like football
- those who are broken hearted
- those who feel in love
- those who believe in life after death
- those who believe in something that cannot be explained
- those who love to dance
- those who feel lonely

For each category the groups will start merge and mix. Always thank them before going back to their starting positions.

At the end, invite to step forward to all 'those who are still learning about life'. Let the participants cherish that moment and then conclude the exercise by saying "there's more that brings us together than



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	<p>we think”.</p> <p>Thank all students for their honesty and promote an open discussion by asking them what they think the exercise was about and why it was done, if they think is necessary to put people into boxes and why then we all do that.</p>
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	<p>The exercise must be run not by a teacher from the class but by an external facilitator (from within the school frame) which could be the school psychologist or someone else who the students have not relation with so that they will not feel judged upon their answers.</p>
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	<p>No specific risks are envisaged.</p>
FEEDBACK TOOL	<p>Feedback is in this case a self-evaluation of the personal thoughts and feeling throughout the activity. The self-feedback can be encouraged by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think this exercise is about? - Why do we all do categorize people? - Do you think is necessary to categorize people? - How did you feel when stepping out from your first area? - How did you feel when you met other mates in the new area? - What did you discover?

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TARGET GROUPS	Primary and secondary school.



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TITLE	No-language communication
RUNNING TIME	2-3 min per pair
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	The purpose of the game is to be introduced to the possibilities in nonverbal communication and then free the participants from the pressure of words ¹ . (Friðriksdóttir, 2012).
MATERIALS	No specific material needed.
PREPARATION	The teacher asks the participants if they know babies and how they communicate. He/she asks them to imagine and produce a conversation between babies that know no words. Gestures are fine because they are present in babies communication but no language is allowed. The trainer divides the participants in pairs. In the first part all the pairs exercise at the same time; then, each pair show its communication to all the other participants. This phase concludes when all the pairs have performed.
IMPLEMENTATION	This exercise belongs to a game called <i>Gibberish</i> (Spolin, 1986) ² . Gibberish consists in the substitution of sensed recognizable words into non-shaped sounds. The trainer calls the pairs and ask them to create a conversation producing the sounds of languages (french, spanish, italian, german, russian, chinese, etc.) that the participants recall but do not know. In the first part all the pairs exercise at the same time; then, each pair show its communication to all the other participants. This phase concludes when all the pairs have performed.

¹ *Clowning and improvisation in the ESL classroom: Observations and suggestions*, p. 16

² *Theater Games for the Classroom - A teacher's handbook*, p. 123



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	<p>Implementation: <i>Gibberish – the TV show</i>. In that game we set up three chairs, one for a TV-host, one for a foreign guest on the TV-show and the third chair was for the translator. The foreign guest would be from a specific country and speak the language from this country gibberish-style. [...] The TV-host would speak English the whole time and the translator would ‘translate’ what the foreigner said to the TV-host and what the TV-host said to the foreigner. So in a way the translator is the one who controls the game³. (Friðriksdóttir, 2012).</p>
<p>ROLE OF THE TEACHER</p>	<p>Refrain from letting their character be from a country where they knew the language.</p>
<p>POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM</p>	<p>No specific risks are envisaged.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK TOOL</p>	<p>Feedback is in this case a self-evaluation of the personal thoughts and feeling throughout the activity. The self-feedback can be encouraged by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think this exercise is about? - Can communication be run by feelings and non verbal communication even if the interlocutors don't share the same language? - What did you discover when talking Gibberish?

³ *Clowning and improvisation in the ESL classroom: Observations and suggestions*, p. 16