

Stand up Workshop Introduction

Hello, my name is Louise Peacock and I'm Head of Drama at DeMontfort University in England. As part of the creativity project, I ran a workshop using stand up comedy techniques. The purpose of using the stand up comedy techniques is to get individuals in the workshop more used to voicing their opinions clearly and interestingly, and encouraging people to have a real attitude about what they want to say. You can do the activities as part of a group or you can carry them out by yourself. They're quite simple to do and so you can do them almost anywhere. So you might do them in a classroom or a studio. You might do them at home, in your bedroom or in the living room, or you might even do them outside.

Stand up Comedy Workshop Activity One

This is the first of the stand up comedy activities and it's called 'rant and rave'. So grab your phone, or a pen and a piece of paper, and write down five topics that you feel strongly about. They might be things that you really like, or they might be things that make you really angry, or they might be things that you really dislike. It doesn't matter, as long as you've got a really strong attitude towards them. Once you've got your five written down, if you're working as part of a group, you can read out your five to the rest of the group, and get somebody to pick the topic that they most want you to use for the next stage of the exercise. If you're working by yourself, just pick one. Or if you're at home with family or friends, you can ask them to pick one for you. Once you know what your topic is, you are going to talk for two or three minutes about that topic explaining exactly how and why you feel so strongly about it. You can record yourself doing this on a phone, or you can do it directly to another person. Either way, you will generate some material and you will experience what it feels like to talk clearly about something that you feel really strongly about.

If you're working as part of a group, it's a good idea once you've done the rant to stop and talk about what you've discovered. How did it feel to talk passionately about something? What did it feel like as an audience to listen to somebody explaining really clearly and strongly, why they feel what they feel. So this exercise helps you to generate content, it helps you to have things to say and it helps you to develop a really clear and strong attitude to the topics that you want to talk about.

Stand Up - Activity Two

The second exercise is called 'questions to develop quick responses' and it's designed to help you be more spontaneous to stop those awkward pauses when somebody asks you a question, but to ensure that you feel like you can leap straight in with something to say. If you're working as part of a group, then one person should be the responder and everybody else in the group has the responsibility to ask

questions. Keep those questions flowing, they can be about anything. They can be about what you had for tea, what you did the previous evening, places that you're planning to travel to, and the person responding just tries to respond as quickly but as fully as possible. So try to avoid single word answers. Don't just say yes or no, but elaborate. Give us more details and all of this will encourage you to practice the skill of talking confidently and freely and ensure that you don't dry up and not have anything to say.

Stand Up Comedy - Activity Three

Final activity of a stand up workshop is to think about editing material. So going back through the material that you've generated in the previous two exercises. You might want to go back to the rant and rave topic that you started with and try to write two to 300 words around the topic that you delivered material on. Think about how to shape the material, think about the best words to use, develop a piece of writing that you feel proud of based on the topic that you spoke so freely about earlier in the activities. This will give you practice at editing material, and will help you to shape telling stories based on things that you've done or things that you feel strongly about and this might be really useful to you in an interview situation, but it's also something that you can put in your portfolio.