

Program Name: Acting & Improvisation

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Artist: Brad Shaw

## Special Requirements:

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Drama, speech, or debate classes only; large, open space

## Other programs by this artist:

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[The Traveling Storyteller](#)  
[Mask Making](#)  
[Art All Around Us](#)  
[Theatre from Head to Toe](#)  
[Musical Theatre](#)  
[Creative Writing/ Playwriting](#)  
[A Story I Can Write!](#)

## Workshop Description

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Many educational researchers agree that improvisation, or telling a story through dialogue and action, allows children to organize events, understand different roles and behaviors, learn how to structure a story, and develop critical thinking skills.

Teaching Artist Brad Shaw, a multi-talented actor and storyteller, leads students in a variety of games and structured improvisations in this active and engaging workshop. Students explore the skills required to spontaneously create characters and scenarios.

During the workshop, Brad will involve all the students in non-threatening games and exercises to

help them become more confident and comfortable speaking before a class. Students will also work on ways to increase their confidence through body language and flexibility in thinking when presenting before a group.

Brad requests that students prepare for the workshop by putting away their books and opening their minds!



## Educational Objectives & Standards

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### Students will:

- Develop skills of spontaneity and original thinking
- Develop a spirit of teamwork and cooperation
- Improve listening and communication skills

### Language Arts:

- Use descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas

### Drama:

- Understands how descriptions, dialogue, and actions are used to discover, articulate, and justify character motivations

## Artist Bio: Brad Shaw

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Brad Shaw, a graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute, is considered a “Renaissance Man” in the theater world. His name can be found on programs as actor, director, choreographer, costumer, set designer, and playwright.

Brad has taught in the Kansas City Public Schools and in the surrounding school districts. He was also an integral part of the building and opening of the Gem Theater at 18th and Vine where he wrote and produced the musical *18th and Vine*.

Brad has worked with the Theater League to produce a professional partnership with Paseo High School. His teaching experience includes acting, improvisation, costuming, puppetry, creative writing, and storytelling.

Brad has been on the Kansas City Young Audiences roster as a Teaching Artist for more than 10 years, and also teaches at the KCYA Community School of the Arts (CSA). He was instrumental in the design of the drama curriculum for the CSA.

### List of Resources:

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#### **Books:**

Improv Game Book II: A Source Book for Improvisation Performance Training and Games

by Lynda Belt, Thespis Productions; 2nd edition (March 1, 1994)  
ISBN: 0962079960

64 drama games for the classroom

by Jill K Peterson  
ASIN: B0006XQJH4

#### Creative Dramatics:

A Guide for Educators.  
by Mary Paul Francis. Pierini Seabury Pr (June, 1971) ISBN: 0816410232

#### **Videos:**

Introduction to Creative Drama and Improvisation by Rives Collins Design Video Communications, 1990

Contact KCYA for more information about this and other programs

816.531.4022  
KCYA.org

### Vocabulary

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**Attitude:** the opinion or feeling that you bring to whatever you're doing.

**Character:** a person in a story

**Compromise:** an agreement reached by people with opposing views, each giving up part of their demands

**Conflict:** disagreement; disunity within or between people

**Cooperation:** working together toward a common goal

**Improvisation:** the act of creating spontaneously; thinking on your feet

**Inspiration:** an encouraging influence

**Persuasion:** the act of convincing someone to do or believe something by giving them good reasons to do so

**Problem solving:** exploring ways conflict can be resolved

**Setting:** where the story or improvisation takes place

**Situation:** the circumstances you find yourself in

### Post-Workshop Activities

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- 1. In collaboration with the art teacher, have the class listen to two contrasting pieces of music. Each student will have a paintbrush, paints, and a piece of paper. As the music plays, students will improvise an abstract painting, allowing the music to guide their hand and the choices it makes: color, boldness/lightness of stroke, tempo of application, use of space, and spatial relationships. The paintings will take exactly as long as the music does. Title the paintings with the names of the music.
- 2. Divide into small groups. Each group creates three situations, writing each down on an index card. Cards are collected in a hat. Groups pick and depict the situation and bring it to a resolution. (Audience gets to guess what the given situation was.) REVERSE: each group writes resolutions. Groups pick, then must back up to create the situation and conflict that leads to the resolution. Let the audience guess which resolution went with which conflict/situation.