

# Forum theatre game

## Teacher's guide



Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Cleaning the embryo or **Performing Jokering**

### Pedagogical objectives

- To try and practice the joker's role.
- To experience what forum theatre is.
- To understand better the motivation of the characters.
- To look for different possible strategies to face antagonists.

### Pedagogical skills

- To choose in this activity, for the braver student it can be a good challenge to act as a shy character and for the more closed student it's also a good challenge to try a strong, dominant character.
- To be able of not showing your idea in this game because you are responsible to lead the game.

### Materials

- 2 chairs

### Evaluation

- 1 To make a video about the exercise and analyse the joker's role.
- 2 To analyse strategies of antagonists.

# Forum theatre game

## Instructions



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### Instructions

- Put 2 chairs in the middle of the room.  
Choose a conflict situation with **2 people**  
(You can use this exercise to work on the Forum Play scenes).
- You can choose a situation where there is a protagonist and an antagonist but it's not compulsory for the exercise.
- **Make two groups**, one group will support one character and the other one.



In this  
game I will  
perform the role  
of the

**JOKER**

This is an opportunity  
for you to practice  
this role.

- The two actors start playing the situation and everybody who has an idea on what to say, or how to change the situation, can

**clap  
and  
stop**

**the situation**

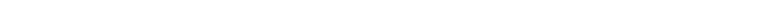
That person can give advice to the actor of her/his team or replace the actor.

- The actor can also clap and stop the situation to ask for help from their support team, as well as I (**Joker**) can

**clap  
and  
stop**

**the situation to ask questions or reflect**



Teacher's guide 

## Performing Joking

## 98

# The only one in the room

## Instructions



Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Cleaning the embryo or **Performing Joking**

### Instructions

- You should wait for the audience in front of the room where the forum theatre will take place. You enter to the room together with the audience and before they sit down you play this game with them.
- One person has to say one thing which is only true in his/her case before he/she sits down. If somebody else think that this is true in his/her case that person also has to sit down.
- Afterwards, a second person who is still standing has to say something and again, if somebody else thinks that this is true in his/her case, also this person will sit down.
- **And so on...Until the last person sits down.**

### Examples

The  
**1st**  
person say:

I like the rap  
music

Afterwards  
he/she sits  
down.

2 people think that they  
also like rap music  
so they also sit down.

The  
**next**  
person say:

I like thick  
and scary  
books

Afterwards  
he/she sits  
down.

Another person also likes  
thick and scary books so  
he/she can sit down.



# The joker's role for the audience in a forum theatre play

## Teacher's guide

Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Cleaning the embryo or **Performing Joking**

### Pedagogical objectives

- To create a relationship between the scene and the audience.
- To explain the forum theatre principles and how the play is going to be performed. –To question the audience about the ongoing play to help them find solutions to resolve the oppression.
- To give voice to all public in the room.
- To accompany the spectator who has an idea or a proposition towards the people on stage and encourage them to play it
- To summarize the spectator's proposal and enhance it.

### Materials

- None.

### Pedagogical skills

- To be able to pay attention to what's happening both on stage and in the audience.
- To know which questions to ask the audience about the ongoing play.
- To listen closely to the audience.
- To establish a trustworthy nice relationship with the audience, supporting what the audience is to saying.
- To be able to gather the whole room, spectators and actors, around the idea of playing together and thinking together.
- To be able to synthesize once a spectator has made his proposal on stage, you must be able to summarize the crucial elements expressed by the spectator to the audience.

### Evaluation

- 1 If there's a trustworthy talkative appeased atmosphere throughout the exercise.
- 2 If the debate seems to go forward, nourished by new questions asked to the audience.
- 3 If the audience finds out many strategies.
- 4 If many people come onto the stage to try.
- 5 If the atmosphere expresses the will to overcome the oppression.
- 6 If there is in the room the feeling of working as a community.

# The joker's role for the audience in a forum theatre play

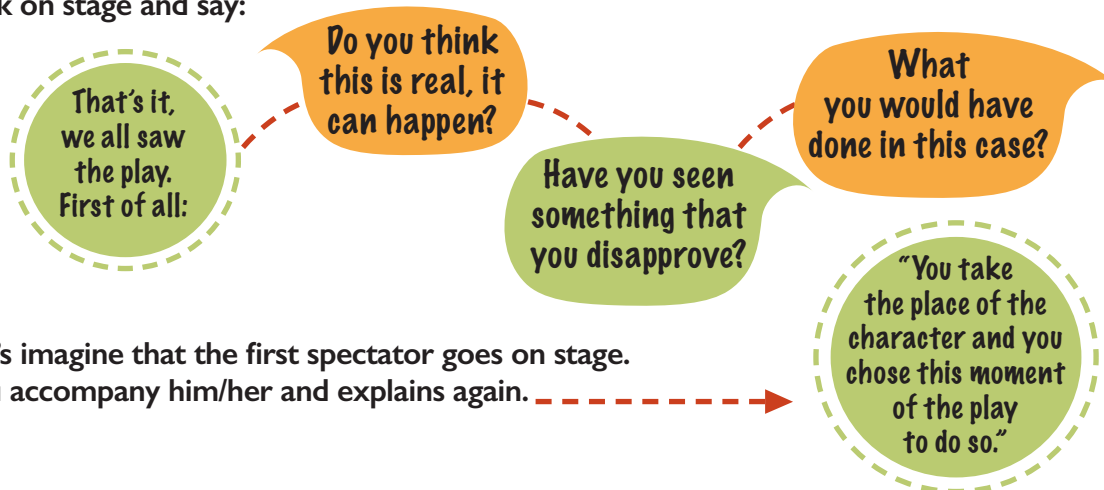
## Instructions



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### Instructions

- When the Forum Play starts, each actor goes on stage as you speak for them to the audience:
- **“Hello everyone.** With this group, we worked to create the plays you’ll watch today. We took our inspiration from stories told by some of the participants which are based on real events. Unfortunately, these stories don’t end well. You will witness that one or several characters will undergo an injustice which provokes our disapproval. This character, will attempt to struggle against this situation without managing to overcome it.
- To do so, **we will first** need you to watch the plays as regular spectators while already wondering: what are the moments you feel you would have acted differently from the struggling character.  
**Secondly,** we will go back to any moment of the play and you’ll be able to try to replace on stage the actor and express a new idea facing the situation. **Do you agree to do that with us?”**
- **You will stand aside while the play is being performed. During the performance, you will pay attention to the reactions among the audience as they could be useful later on. Once the play is over, you go back on stage and say:**



- **Let’s imagine that the first spectator goes on stage. You accompany him/her and explains again.** ———→
- You ask the actors to take back the play at the moment chosen by the spectator.
- You listen carefully what the spectator is saying or doing. Once the spectator is done with his/her proposal, you demand how he/she are feeling, and you thanks him/her.
- **You summarize what was has been played, and ask the audience again**
- **if someone else has a different proposal, always reminding that it is possible to find different solutions and if they don’t find any today it is however important to have more awareness on the problem, to encourage all possible ideas to come on stage.**
- At the end of the performance, you end up by summarizing all the proposals made by the spectators. You can say that these proposals can be applied in real life situation.
- **Thank the audience for their participation.**

# Introductory game: good morning

## Teacher's guide

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### Pedagogical objectives

- To facilitate public interventions by creating a relaxed atmosphere in the room.

### Pedagogical skills

- The joker should present the game as a challenge or a surprise, by showing a concrete example with someone in the audience.
- An alternative is to choose an easier step to warm up the audience

### Materials

- None.

### Evaluation

- ❶ If the audience participates easily.

# Introductory game: good morning

## Instructions



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### Instructions

- I will explain the game with an example with a spectator.
- I will say



- Now, without leaving the first person and keeping the hands together, both the Joker and the spectator go toward two close persons to shake their hand with their left ones.
- Now, when both hands are in touch, the first can leave the first person and look for a new hand. And so on, hand after hand.
- I invite you **(the audience)** to do the same with your neighbours **(actors can join to help the Joker)**.

The atmosphere in the room gets **easily funny** and **warm** and **people stand up and go** to say

"hello"

to  
strangers



<http://youtu.be/x4G0ZQrpJrA>



Fotel Chap.5: Forum Theatre (Elan)  
<http://youtu.be/x4G0ZQrpJrA>

# What to do when the search for solutions is blocked?

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### Pedagogical objectives

- To facilitate the research of solutions in a Forum play overcoming a block of imagination.

### Pedagogical skills

- To be able to be sensitive and feel when the audience is getting frustrated by antagonists on stage.

### Materials

- None.

### **Evaluation**

- 1 If the audience is able to propose new solutions
- 2 If the audience is able to propose innovative solutions.

# What to do when the search for solutions is blocked?

## Instructions



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### Instructions

- When you feel solutions are blocked and spectators are risking to get frustrated and pessimistic, you can propose a break.

**I propose  
(to the audience)**  
to make pairs and discuss  
what is blocking the situation  
onto the stage and whether  
you have a new proposal,  
different from what  
it's already been tried.

**After 5-10 minutes**, you propose to re-  
start the Forum play asking for  
new interventions.



# What happens if someone wants to replace the oppressor?

## Teacher's guide



Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Clearing the embryo or Tips for joking

### Pedagogical objectives

- To help the public to reflect about a situation and to find themselves answers or solutions to a situation of oppression.
- To help the public to find what kind of actions are needed to change an oppressive situation.

### Materials

- None.

### Pedagogical skills

- To have a maieutic attitude with the audience.
- The idea is reminiscent of the philosopher Plato. Plato discusses the Socratic Method, a form of inquiry and debate between individuals with opposing viewpoints based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to illuminate ideas. It is a dialectical method, often involving an oppositional discussion in which the defence of one point of view is pitted against the defence of another; one interlocutor may lead another to contradict himself in some way, strengthening the inquirer's own point. As to maieutics, it is based on **Plato's theory** of recollection (anamnesis), so that it holds that knowledge is latent in the conscious mind, awaiting discovery. This discovery is sought through dialectic and in contrast to **Plato's theory**, through inductive reasoning rather than deductive.

### Evaluation

- 1 New reflections appeared in the public?
- 2 Has the public proposed new interventions?

# What happens if someone wants to replace the oppressor?

## Instructions



Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Clearing the embryo or

### Instructions

- If someone in the audience wants to replace the oppressor there are different possibilities depending on the proposal.
- If someone in the audience has the opinion the actor is not behaving correctly ask the spectator to come on stage to replace the oppressor to show what 'correctly' means for her or him.
- After seeing the proposal it is possible that:
  - ▶ The spectator has shown new strategies of oppression that were not presented in the play, so it's important to redo them for the audience and for the actor acting as the oppressor. Then it's time to ask the audience what can be done to change the situation of oppression.

The spectator proposes an oppressor that changes the situation, in a way that makes the oppression disappear.

Then the joker can ask the public if this situation is

"magic"?

- ▶ **"Magic"** in theatre of the oppressed is called so when a situation changes without anyone pushing it to change, without a reason. The second question to the audience is:

For instance

Will this character change with no reason?

"Would a director of a school act like this?"  
So what needs to happen with the other characters that will make them change?

For instance

"What changes in the student will make the director change?"

And then follow the questions to other proposals from the audience to change the situation of oppression.



# Guardian angel

## Teacher's guide



Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Clearing the embryo or **Tips for joking**

### Pedagogical objectives

- To involve the shy part of the public.
- To empower the audience and help them to enter on stage.

### Pedagogical skills

- Be attentive – give different possibilities to different people.
- Work with this possibility before with your group during the workshop.

### Materials

- None.

### Evaluation

- 1 Does the spectator enter on stage?
- 2 Does he arrive to change something?
- 3 Has he/she exerted influence on a situation?

# Guardian angel

## Instructions



Group building or Looking for oppressions or Building a forum theatre embryo or Clearing the embryo or **Tips for joking**

### Instructions

- During Forum session, when someone has an idea but doesn't want to act as protagonist, you can propose him or her to be **the guardian angel of a protagonist.**



**The guardian angel's role**

is to help the protagonist to reach his goal.

You can tell him what he should say, how he should behave, where he should stand.

"Just stand behind him and if you see that something is going wrong – **intervene.**"

### Variation

You can invite 2 or 3 spectators to be guardian angels (to support each other) if they need it.



# I agree, I don't agree

## Teacher's guide

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### Pedagogical objectives

- To involve the public.
- To introduce the main topic.
- To introduce each character to the audience.

### Pedagogical skills

- To make a first introduction
- Don't judge opinions or experiences – appreciate diversity.

### Materials

- None.

### Evaluation

- 1 Did each person express his/her opinions?
- 2 Did the number of people who were involved increase during the exercise?
- 3 Did the audience remark what the opinion/ experience of a character was?

# I agree, I don't agree

## Instructions



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### Instructions

- I will say a sentence. If you agree with it, nod your head **(or make a gesture)**, if you don't agree: make a sign with your hands **(show example)**. If you don't know or you don't have any opinion about it – shake your hands.
- **Also notice our characters' opinions** (they are standing on the stage).

### Examples of sentences

"I've decided to not go to school at least once in my life."

"I know someone who is an Early School Leaver."

"It's mainly the teacher's fault that some pupils decided to give up school."

- You can also quote the life motto of some important characters from the play. **e.g.**

"Your life depends only on you"

"If you want to have a good job, you have to finish school with good results"

- At the end you can ask what they know now about characters.

