

Improv Your Way

To Better SME
Relationships

LIVE

FEATURING:

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Rules of Improv



- Receive and agree
- Add something of your own
- Make statements
- Keep it moving forward
- Disagreeing kills the scene

Why Improv for Designers?



- Think in the moment
- React to difficult situations in a positive way
- Maintain composure when faced with rejection
- Be positive and approachable

Objectives

- Experience real-world challenges.
- Participate in the act of developing creative conversations by saying “thank you” and “yes, and...” instead of “no”.
- Develop your list of spontaneous responses to use “in the moment” in your design practice.

Disclaimer

In this improv workshop, we’re using some extreme examples. Not because we believe all SMEs are difficult - that’s simply not true. We use these examples because when designers practice with rare, over the top, extreme situations they become more prepared to positively react to day-to-day situations.

How to Play Today



- Respond in Chat.
- Be spontaneous. Respond as quickly as possible.
- Stay positive. Keep the conversation moving forward.
- Have fun!

Act 1: Thank you!

Participants practice receiving “gifts.”

Rules:

1. A prompt will appear.
2. Respond as quickly as possible.
3. Say thank you, then make a positive comment to keep the conversation moving forward.



For example...

SME

"I brought a thumb drive with all my PowerPoint slides!"

ID

"Thank you! This will be a great starting point!"

Thank You: Prompt 1

SME

“Here’s a stack of videos from my face-to-face sessions!”

ID

How would you respond?

Thank You: Prompt 2

SME

“This is the latest print version of the training manual we’ll be adapting to online delivery.”

ID

How would you respond?

Thank You: Prompt 3

SME

“Remember that project we worked on last year? I had a chance to look it over and I have some revisions for you!”

ID

How would you respond?

Act 2: Yes, and...

Participants practice making positive responses to difficult situations.

Rules:

1. A prompt will appear.
2. Respond as quickly as possible.
3. Respond with a positive acknowledgement and a constructive comment.

Yes,
and...

For example...

SME

“I’ve found the perfect video to explain this topic on YouTube!”

ID

“Yes, and we have options for using that. What do you like about it?”

ID

“Great! Can you share that with me?”

Yes, And...Prompt 1

SME

“I saw a new tool at a conference, and I want to use it in all my courses!”

ID

How would you respond?

Yes, And... Prompt 2

SME

“My content is already
accessible.”

ID

How would you respond?

Yes, And... Prompt 3

SME

“I’ve typed up all of my hand-written notes. We can use those in the online version?”

ID

How would you respond?



- What did these two activities teach us?

Debrief



- Respect the person
- Receive the “gift”
- Acknowledge (time, effort, thought)
- Keep it positive
- Move the conversation forward

Debrief

Act 3: Design Player

You are a designer consulting with multiple subject matter experts. They have different needs, levels of experience – and personalities.

Rules:

1. Respond to each subject matter expert statement.
2. Move the conversation forward.
3. If you can't think of anything to say, type "I'm out."



For example...

<p>SME</p> <p>“I don’t want to develop this course (or training). I’m being forced to do it.”</p>	<p>ID</p> <p>“I really appreciate how much expertise you have in this area. I have a tested process that will help expedite things.”</p>
	<p>ID</p> <p>“We’re in this together and I’m ready to help you get it off your plate as quickly as possible.”</p>
	<p>ID</p> <p>“I’m out.”</p>

Prompt 1

SME

“I’ve been teaching this subject for 30 years. What could you possibly have to offer me? I could do this on my own.”

ID

How would you respond?

Debrief 1

Portfolio of Success



Course
Demos



Known Best
Practices



Your
Expertise



Case Studies
of Past Projects

Collaboration



Common
Goal



Shared
Language



Mutual
Respect

Prompt 2

SME

“I don’t believe this design will work.”

ID

How would you respond?

Debrief 2

Portfolio
of Success

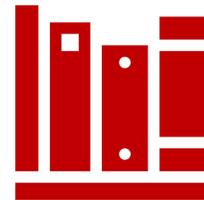
Research



Known Best
Practices



Strategy
Behind
Technology



Current
Academic
Studies



Current
Cases from
Industry



Formative
Evaluation

Prompt 3

SME

“I don’t know why we’ve been assigned to work together. What do IDs do anyway?”

ID

How would you respond?

Debrief 3

Portfolio
of Success

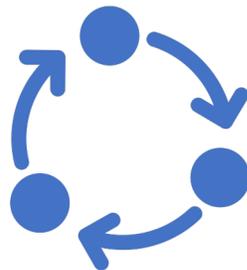
Passion for
Quality Design



Elevator
Speech



Known Best
Practices



Proven
Process



For Courses



For Programs



For Learners

Prompt 4

SME

“This project is interfering with my other deadlines. I need to focus on building my professional portfolio.”

ID

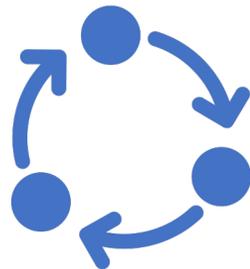
How would you respond?

Debrief 4

Portfolio
of Success



Known Best
Practices



Proven
Process

Scholarship



Papers



Presentations



Research
Projects

Prompt 5

SME

“I don’t believe in learning objectives. We don’t need to include them.”

ID

How would you respond?

Debrief 5

Portfolio
of Success

Collaboration



Strategy
Behind
Technology



Known Best
Practices



Case Studies
of Past
Projects



Common
Goal



Creative
Questions

Prompt 6

SME

“I have big ideas! I have funds and time available to work. Let’s do something amazing!”

ID

How would you respond?

Debrief 6

Collaboration



Mutual
Respect

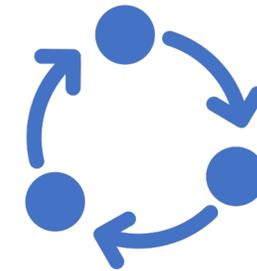


Common
Goal

Portfolio
of Success



Known Best
Practices



Proven
Process



- What did this activity teach us?
- What themes or strategies did you see?

Debrief



- Move conversation forward
- Meet SMEs where they are
- Plant seeds to grow relationships
- Be positive and approachable
- Provide evidence
- Ask better questions
- Be authentic

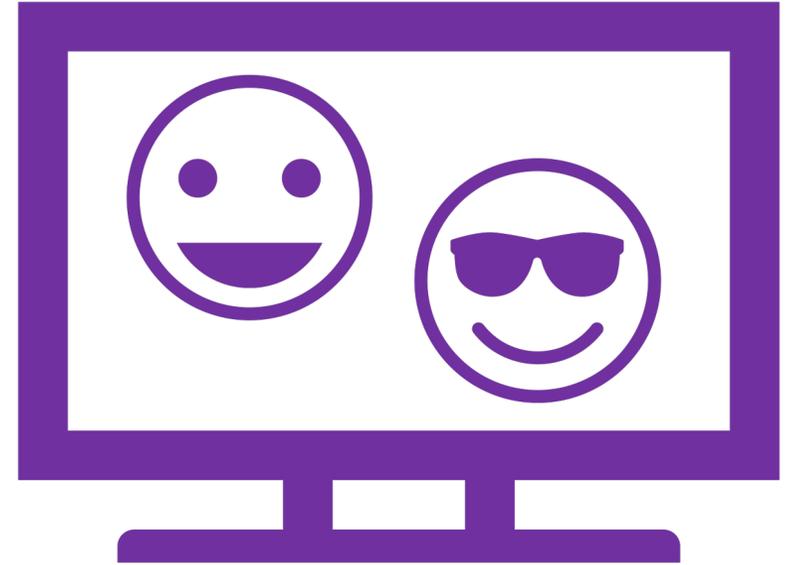
Debrief

Act 4: Infomercial

Pitch the value of instructional designers.

Rules:

1. Act as infomercial hosts.
2. Give your best rationale.
3. What are the benefits of collaborating with IDs?
4. What value do designers add?





- What themes or strategies did you see?
- What items will you include in your personal elevator speech?

Debrief

Improv for Designers



- Explain your role without hesitation
- Form your portfolio of success
- Ask a question in different ways
- Practice on your own or with colleagues

Wrap Up

- What are your takeaways?
- How do you view the SME / designer relationship?
- What questions do you have?

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If you made a movie about instructional designers, what would you use for the theme song?

For example:

Eye of the Tiger

Play On!