

Waiting Room Exercise

This exercise can be performed in groups of 4-8 but it's up to you to determine what works best for each of your classes.

You set up a waiting room on stage or somewhere in your performance space. Make sure you have the number of chairs on stage (in the waiting room) for the student-actors who will be participating in the exercise.

You can form your groups before the exercise to ensure that students who would be best served not to participate with each other are separated, etc. Or you can draw student names randomly, which I often do when utilizing this exercise as I use this when I need a change of pace or do not have anything planned.

The nice thing about this exercise is that there is an audience for each waiting room scene made up of the students who are not participating in the current scene/round. This is a nice opportunity to teach/discuss audience etiquette and note-taking and allow them to practice these skills when not in the scene.

Prior to the scene(s) start:

Each student will determine a character they're portraying and the news/information they're waiting for.

Examples include: an employee is waiting for a potential promotion, an actor waiting to see if they got their dream role, a student waiting to hear if they made it into college, or an inventor waiting to see if their project will be funded by an investor.

If you have a time crunch (or as I like to call it Tuesday) all the characters can play the same scenario.

Assign each actor a number and have them enter the waiting room in numerical order, giving time for each actor/character to get acclimated to the space. You determine if the characters can talk to/with each other. I often have a no dialogue/speaking rule for this exercise as it focuses on the **subtext** and being fully engaged in the moment.

With a randomizer or slips of paper with numbers on them randomly select who will be called into the office. Have a chair or area separate from the waiting room where the selected actor sits or stands and hold up a green circle or a red circle that the actor can see. Green: the character got what they wanted. Red: the character was denied what they wanted. Give them ten seconds to react and then instruct them to join the audience and draw another number.

This is a great exercise to teach **listening and reacting** without the pressure of playing a fully memorized scene.