



The Power of Improv in our Classrooms

NCUEA Summer Meeting
June 30th, 2024



the
unscripted
project

our mission & vision

Our mission is to equip students with the building blocks for personal and professional success through the power of an improv education. We hope to help create a world in which every child leaves school prepared to embrace challenges, to seize opportunities, and to unlock their own potential.



About us

The Unscripted Project is an award-winning, BIPOC-led Philadelphia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to equipping students with critical social-emotional and interpersonal skills through the transformative medium of improvisational theater.

We do this primarily through our core program, a free 10-week series of in-school applied improv workshops in public middle and high schools. Since our inception in 2020, we have worked with over 3,000 students. Through our workshops, students develop key life skills like speaking confidently, collaborating effectively, and growing from mistakes in a low-stakes and laughter-filled environment.



problem: students are leaving school feeling unprepared for college and their careers



74% of Philadelphia public school students report that they do not feel prepared for life following graduation



Communication, self-confidence and other “soft” skills are not emphasized in many public schools, despite being crucial for success afterward



Practical theatre & drama education is excluded in “core” curriculums, limiting their access by students in the public school system²



We believe that the arts, and especially improv training, is a powerful creative and educational tool to develop students into capable individuals prepared to embrace challenge and unlock their own potential.

improv

is a **collaborative form of theater** in which everything is **made up on the spot**. There are **no scripts**, no rehearsals, just pure, spontaneous creation. Beyond the laughter and unpredictability, improv is a powerful tool for **personal and social development**.

our approach: **key tenets of improv**

- 1 Yes, And
- 2 Act & react
- 3 Look good by making your team look good
- 4 Be vulnerable
- 5 There are no mistakes

our approach: improv is a versatile tool with tangible benefits...

... in the classroom

"improv in the classroom contributed to individual students' self-efficacy and strengthened classroom community...The young people's increased engagement led to confidence with expression, helping them to extend their authoring abilities in both spoken and written forms "

International Journal for Education & Arts

... in the workplace

"Improvisational theatre training creates a compelling experience of co-creation through interaction and, as such, can be used to build distinctive kinds of leadership skills including adopting an external focus, adaptability to changing conditions, being curious and responsive and listening and collaboration"

Human Resource Development Review

...and for our well-being

"" Teens screened for social phobia showed reduced anxiety after improv training... and reduced anxiety was correlated with improved social skills, hope, and creativity"

The Arts in Psychotherapy

our approach: core program and more

1 An innovative 10-week curriculum

Our free 10-week series of improv workshops in classrooms is our signature program, created with our partners and aligned to state standards. The series is taught by professional teaching artists in collaboration with classroom teachers. Using improv, we create a safe and nurturing environment for students to be themselves, make mistakes and grow with their peers.

With an explicit focus on social-emotional learning and college & career readiness, our curriculum is focused on one key life skill each week.



Additional Programming

2 ACT 48
accredited PD

3 Afterschool
program

4 Corporate
workshops

Select partners:



The Second City



our reach

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

18 schools | **41** classrooms | **946** students

400+ hours of improv education



"I feel free when I am doing improv - my mind is not preventing me or hindering me from doing what I actually want to do. Through Unscripted, I have learned that it is okay to make mistakes, not overthink things, and to work with your teammates, not against them"

-Journae Barnes
Unscripted Student 10th Grade

our impact

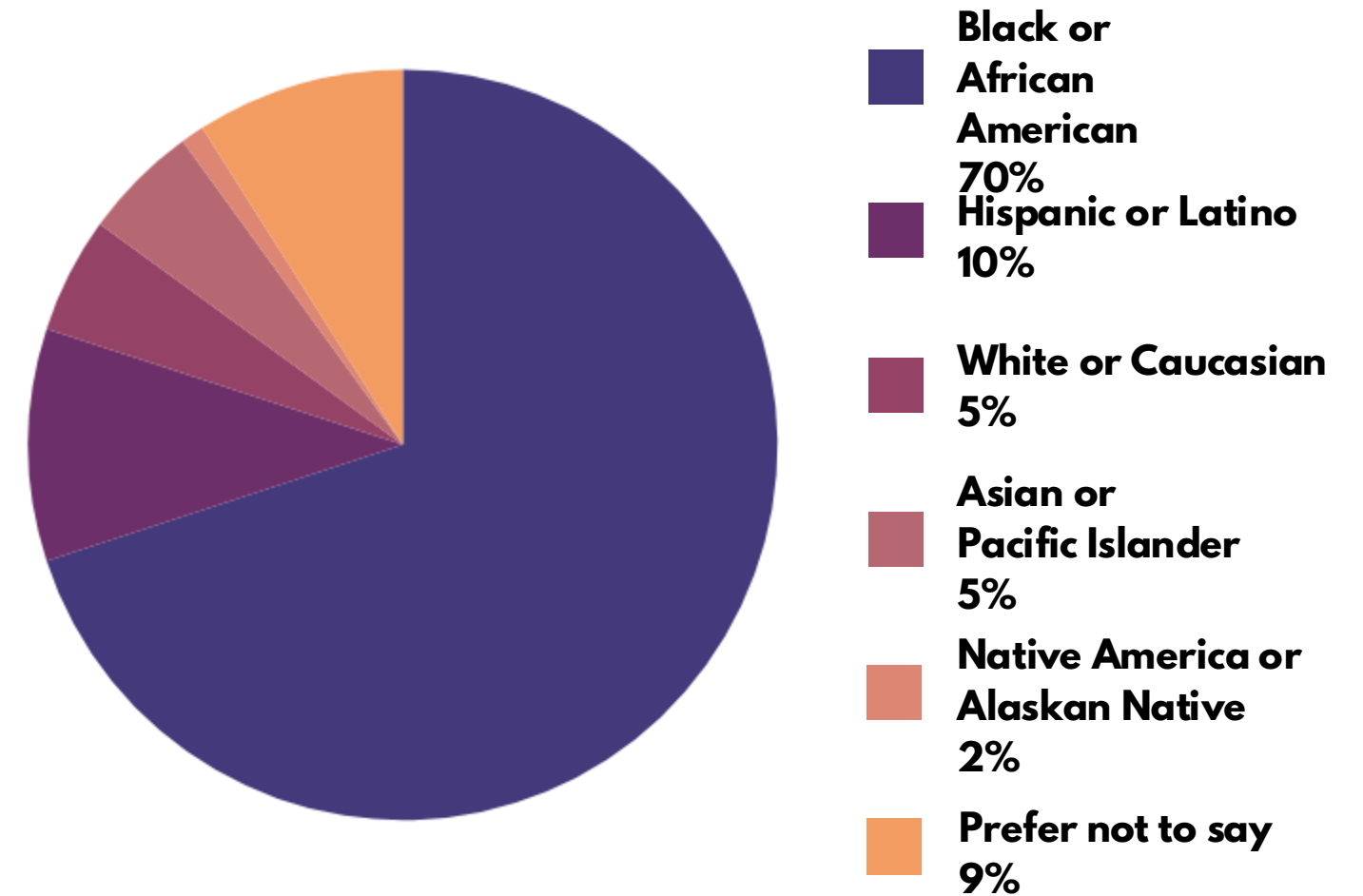
79% of students feel they can **better understand their emotions** and the emotions of others

77% of students state that they feel more **confident** participating in class following the program

67% of students demonstrated increases in **social self-efficacy**

80% of students stated they believe they are better **communicators** than they were prior to the program

81% of students felt more **comfortable with their peers** in this class as a result of this program



At the schools we work at, the average percent of students who are classified as “economically disadvantaged” is 90%

(CEP rate obtained by the School District of Philadelphia and is based on the % of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch)

now, let's try it!

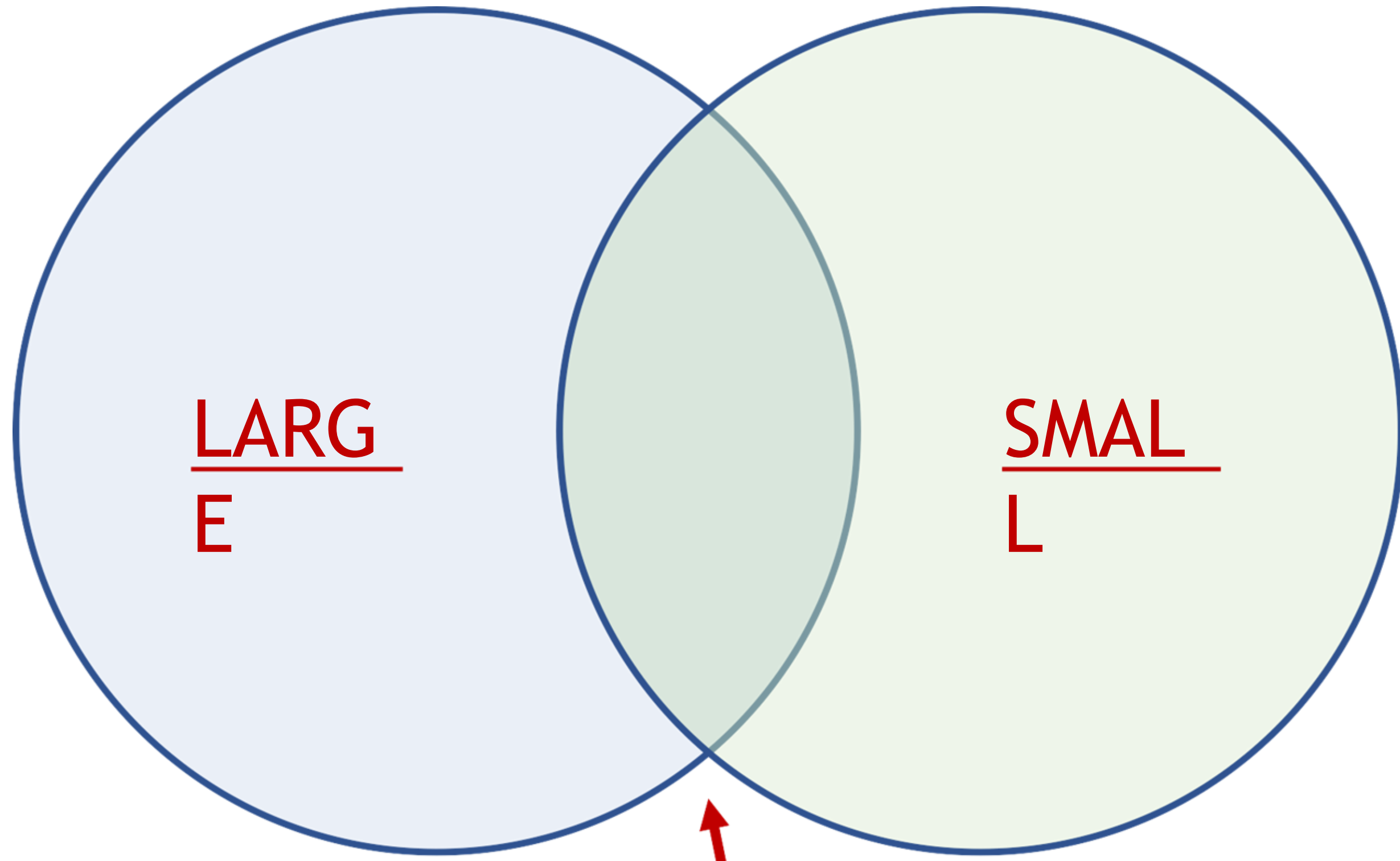
A large, dense pile of British two-pound coins, showing various angles and details of the coins' design, including the profile of Queen Elizabeth II and the text 'ELIZABETH II' and 'TWO POUNDS'.

Here is the Situation

~47%







A new reality

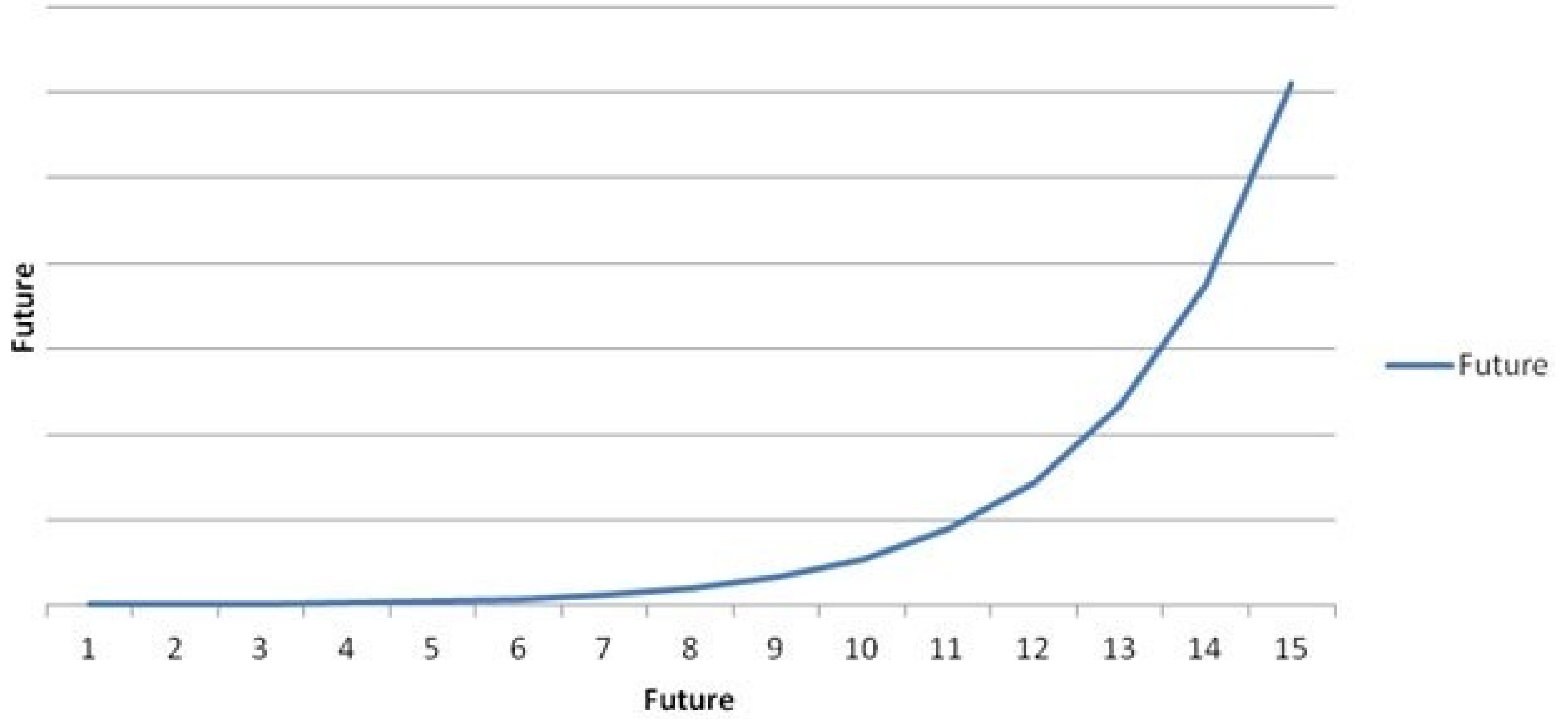


NO





Future



Discussion questions

- 1 How can the principles of improv, such as **growing from mistakes** and **active listening**, be integrated into your work both in the **classrooms** and the **unions**?
- 2 How do you anticipate the skills and strategies learned here could impact your students **social-emotional development**, **confidence**, and overall **classroom experience**?
- 3 What might you, **personally**, take away from this workshop?

How to get involved

- 1 Bring us to your school or district for a professional development workshop with school staff
- 2 Bring us to your classroom, school, or district for student-facing programming
- 3 Join the Unscripted Project community
Donate, subscribe, and spread the word!

Continue to advocate for the arts and improv in your districts, schools, classrooms..

Learn more: www.unscriptedproject.org, email at info@unscriptedproject.org

Please note – all programming outside of our core 10-week program in Philadelphia will have fees associated to help our nonprofit grow!





“Improv has helped me with my social anxiety. I have learned to be kind and have an open mind”

**UNSCRIPTED STUDENT
8TH GRADE**

IMPROV TO ME IS...

"being quick on my feet"

"not being afraid to make mistakes"

"a family"

the unscripted project

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