



# Yes - And / Or / Not

## Information Literacy and Instruction Through an Improvisational Lens

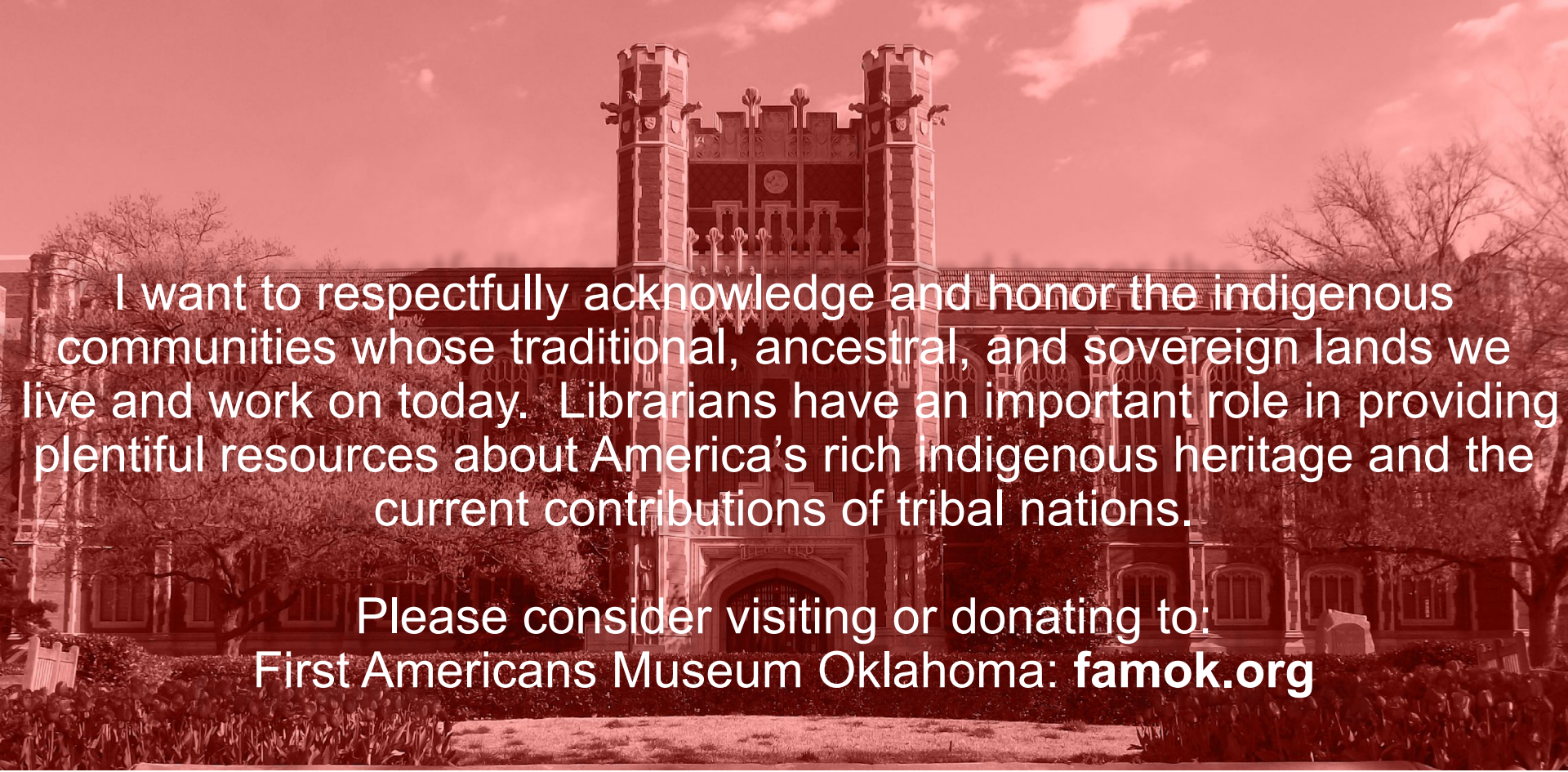
Jay A. Edwards, University of Oklahoma Libraries



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

**#libraryimprov**  
**@OU\_Libraries**

*What will you do at the intellectual  
crossroads of the University of Oklahoma?*



I want to respectfully acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities whose traditional, ancestral, and sovereign lands we live and work on today. Librarians have an important role in providing plentiful resources about America's rich indigenous heritage and the current contributions of tribal nations.

Please consider visiting or donating to:  
First Americans Museum Oklahoma: **famok.org**



# Info Lit and Improv

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- Instruction
- Information Literacy
- Applied Improvisation
- Playfulness



Librarian workshops by  
Kate Dohe (left) and Jill Markgraf (right)

# Applied Improvisation

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- Low-stakes, skills-focused group activities
- You are not on your own
- You are allowed to make mistakes
- NOT stand-up comedy
  - You don't have to be clever or funny
- You can say the first thing that comes to mind
  - Respect your teammates
- Observation is a valid form of learning

# Applied Improv (Pre-Pandemic)



New Library Student  
Assistant Orientation



Librarian Workshop  
at Tulsa

# Applied Improv (COVID Edition)

Step 1: Write a word on the **white** card  
(Something to bring to a picnic.)

Step 2: Pass the card to the right  
Repeat

For example:

*Sandwiches*

**BLANKET**

Basket

*Plates*

CHEESE

# YES, AND

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YES: Accept and receive information

AND: Respond and build with new information

For example:

Person A: Let's go to the movies!

Person B: *Yes, and* let's sneak out of the house through the basement.

# YES, AND Exercise

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- Go around the table

First person: Say an **item to take to a picnic**

Next person: “Yes, and” then add another item

Repeat



# YES, AND Exercise (COVID Edition)

Step 1: Something to bring to a picnic

Step 2: Pass the card right

Step 3: Something that goes well **with**  
the previous item

Step 4: Pass the card

Repeat

For example:

*Waffles*

**SYRUP**

Basket

*Plates*

CHEESE

# Word-At-A-Time Sentence

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Step 1: Write a word on the

GREEN OR YELLOW card

Step 2: Pass the card

Step 3: Write a (grammatically correct) word

Repeat

Step 4: Put a period when the sentence ends.

Take the card out of rotation.

For example:

*One word at a  
TIME!*

# Skills related to YES, AND

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- Acceptance
- Adaptation
- Active Listening
- Avoiding Preconceived Ideas
- Awareness
- Commitment
- Failure Recovery
- Flexibility
- Focus
- Goal setting/resetting
- Making Connections
  - With others
  - Between ideas
- Play
- Respect
  - For each other
  - For their choices
- Support for Each Other
- Trust

# Synonyms Exercise

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- Go around the table
- First person says a word
- The next person says a **synonym**  
Or broader, narrower, or related topic  
To the *previous word only*  
(Repeat)



# Synonyms Exercise (COVID Edition)

Step 1: Write a word on the  
PURPLE OR PINK card

Step 2: Pass the card

Step 3: Write a synonym

Or broader, narrower, or related topic

To the *previous word only*

(Repeat)

For example:	Or:
<i>Literacy</i>	<i>Literacy</i>
<b>PROFICIENCY</b>	<b>LEARNING</b>
Being good at	Education
<i>Talent</i>	<i>Lesson</i>
<i>Skill</i>	<i>Study</i>

# Divergent & Convergent Thinking Exercise (COVID Edition)

- 1) A letter of the alphabet
- 2) First word that starts with that letter
- 3) Second word that starts with that letter
- 4) A topic that incorporates those words

For example:

*H*

**HIPPOPOTOMUS**

Harm

*Human activities that  
that harm*

*hippopotomuses*

# National Resources



## The Improv Network

[www.theimprovnetwork.org](http://www.theimprovnetwork.org)



## The Applied Improvisation Network

[appliedimprovisation.network/](http://appliedimprovisation.network/)



## Library Improv

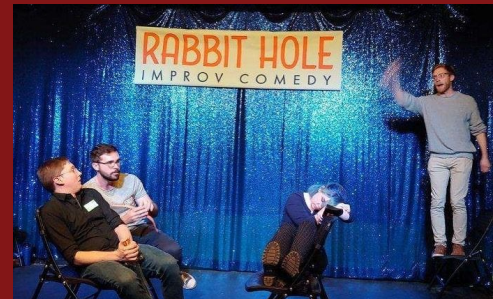
[libraryimprov.blogspot.com](http://libraryimprov.blogspot.com)

# Local Resources

- Local small businesses  
Hold workshops, classes and shows
- Check local schools, colleges and universities  
Student groups and theater teachers  
can be recruited to teach workshops



OKC Improv in Oklahoma City



Rabbit Hole Improv in Tulsa

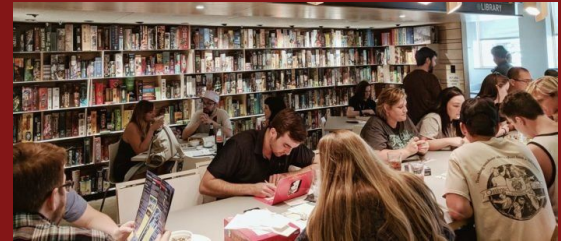


# Board Games!

- Provide opportunities to practice:
  - Situational awareness
  - Flexibility within structure (play within rules)
  - Various levels of interpersonal interaction
- Various venues:
  - Play at home with friends and family
  - Board game cafés
  - Board game programming at libraries



Commonspace Games in Norman  
(formerly Loot & XP)



Shuffles in Tulsa

# Resources by:

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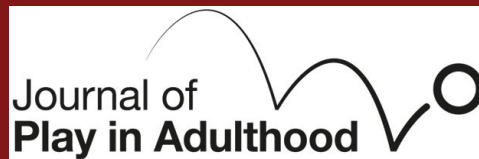
**Kate Dohe & Erin Pappas**  
Improv and Libraries  
Previous LOEX presenters



**R. Keith Sawyer**  
Improv & Teaching



**Tony Stamatoplos (right)**  
Improv and Libraries  
Previous LOEX presenter



**Journal of Play in Adulthood**

Upcoming special issue, “The Playful Library”

# Additional Resources:

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## Reading List:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VymaWcoZ7PtTrmeMOSmWhLSy7LNSp0ihlCwu35Xd8s/edit?usp=sharing>

Edwards, Jay Andrew. “Lessons from Improv Theater: Applying Improvisational Concepts and Techniques to LIS.” *Texas Library Journal* 96, no. 2.5 (2020). <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/329548>

# Final Exercise:

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- **Give 3+ people your card.**  
Or re-use an index card  
with your contact/social media info





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