The IF Impromptu Speech

Goal: To practice impromptu speaking skills in an imaginative and entertaining way.

For this impromptu speech, each student draws one of the IF questions. Require that students answer the question and explain their answer to the rest of the class. The following impromptu questions will provide a good start.

- IF you could relive one year of your life, which year would it be?
- IF you could only save one thing from your burning house, apartment, dorm room, what would it be?
- IF you could spend a day alone with any person from history, who would it be?
- IF you could change one event in United States history, what would you change?
- IF you could declare a new national holiday, what would you observe?
- IF you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live?
- IF you could choose one characteristic for your first born child, what would it be?
- IF you could see only one movie in your entire life, which one would you choose?
- IF you had only one friend, who would it be?
- IF a magic genie allowed you three wishes, what would you wish for?
- IF you could choose your perfect mate, what characteristics would that person have?
- IF you won a million dollars in the lottery, what would you do with the money?
- IF you could design your perfect house or apartment, what would you include?
- IF you could plan a perfect vacation, what would you do?
- IF you could visit some ancient city or place, where would you go?
- IF you could travel through time, where would you go?
- IF you were President, what would be your first goal?

- IF you lost one of your senses, which would you give up?
- IF you had to choose between a career and a family, which would you choose?
- IF you could save all the living things on earth except one from a terrible flood, which creature would you leave behind?
- IF you were the first person to contact alien visitors, what would you say?
- IF you had to choose between a financially rewarding job and a personally rewarding job, which would you choose?
- IF you could star in one television program, which would you choose?
- IF you could be recognized worldwide for one contribution to humanity, what would you choose?
- IF you could invent one thing, what would you invent?
- IF you were turned into an animal, which animal would you want to be?
- IF you could be immortalized on a monument, what would you want your epitaph to read?
- IF you could excel in one sport, which would you choose?
- IF you could have traveled with an early explorer, who would you accompany?
- IF you could visit another place in the solar system, where would you visit?

Debriefing

Follow this learning activity with a discussion of how to improve impromptu speaking. I have found that students are ready to discuss impromptu preparation strategies at this point. They can also distinguish the qualities that constitute excellent impromptu speaking.

Readings


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Send, Receive, and Draw

Goal: To identify and engage the elements of the interpersonal communication process.

As is the case with any structured learning exercise, games are not stand alone techniques that replace all other teaching methods. An educationally motivated game serves to supplement the overall learning objectives in the classroom. Games have the potential to enhance, reinforce, illustrate, and complement various teaching strategies. The key is to connect with students and create a role for students in the learning process. With games, students gain responsibility for learning outcomes (Lederman & Ruben, 1984; Pfeiffer, 1995).

This variation to an old, classic learning activity lets students actively engage in the different ways people communicate. Through the experience of the game, each student has the ability to use and further understand the assumptions behind the linear, interactive, and transactive views of communication (e.g., Berko, Rosenfeld, and Samovar, 1997). Through the communication exchanges within small groups, students develop their understanding of the basic components of the communication process (source, message, channel, receiver, and feedback) by exploring how each view influences this process.