

Lesson Plan

“In a Pickle”: A Sketch Comedy Lesson from a Sketch Comedy Writer

Project Summary

After an awesome *In the Industry* with writer Brig Muñoz-Liebowitz (writer for *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Diary of a Future President*, and *People of Earth*), it's time to put her advice into practice. This lesson is to teach students how to create a short scripted sketch using her techniques as a comedy writer.

Performance Objectives

PRE-PRODUCTION GOALS

1. Watch the In the Industry with Writer and Producer, Brig Munoz-Liebowitz.
 - a. Link (<https://www.studenttelevision.com/inside-the-industry>)
2. Listen to her advice about writing.
3. Think of a funny situation that has happened in your life that you can use to write about.

PRODUCTION GOALS

1. Students will create an original **comedy sketch** for TV.

POST-PRODUCTION GOALS

1. Students will review their scripts and discuss the effectiveness of the sketch.
2. Discuss target audience. Explain how content needs to contain widespread appeal.
3. Do a live reading of the script or shoot/edit the scene.

Resources & Equipment

1. Pen/Pencil
2. Paper
3. Access to Internet
4. Camera



5. Tripod
6. Mics for shooting pilot
7. Computer with editing software

Industry Testimony

"Comedy is 80% Surprise and 20% empathy..."

- Brig Munoz-Liebowitz, Writer/Producer

Assessment

1. Begin by watching the *In the Industry* with Brig Munoz-Liebowitz.
 - a. What stood out to you?
 - b. What did you learn from her?
 - c. What advice stuck with you the most?
2. Now, it is your turn:
 - a. Have students write a 1-page comedy sketch using a real experience that has happened in their lives. To do this, let's follow Brig's model, which is:
 - i. **Get your Character into a Pickle, Stay in the Pickle, Get them out of the Pickle.**
 - ii. **Remember to have a setup, elaborate on the setups, and then give your punch!**
 - iii. **Make sure you tell a story with a beginning, middle and end.**
 - iv. **Write comedy using what you know (i.e. your own life)**
 - b. Using whichever scripting format that you want, write a short 1-2 page comedy sketch for TV showing a humorous event from your own life.
3. After the students write their sketches, they have a two options:
 - a. Do a live reading of the script in class with their peers.
 - b. Record the sketch with actors.
4. Have the students critique one another's scripts, offering suggestions for improvements as well as pointing out the best parts of the work.

*Modifications for Virtual Teaching

If your students are working from home in isolation, share your introductory materials with them virtually. Then, have the students complete the sketches from home. Have the students complete a read through as well as critiques via video-streaming (Zoom, Facetime, Google Meet, etc). All of this assignment can be done virtually, just set the



expectation for the final product to be reasonable for a student working with a phone and laptop.

Contact

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