"BUILDING ON THE IDEAS AS OPPOSED TO TEARING DOWN IDEAS": IMPROVISER FACILITATORS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORKPLACE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

When people think of improvisation, typically, performance arts come to mind. However, improv has offstage uses in adult learning—and more narrowly in workplace learning. The purpose of this study was to examine trained improviser facilitators' uses of improvisational strategies in workplace learning. The conceptual framework drew from literature on improvisation and applications of improv in workplace learning. This study employed a basic interpretive qualitative approach. Sixteen participants participated in this study, and data collection included interviews, participant responses to a reflective writing prompt, and artifacts. Results from this study highlighted the benefits an improviser facilitator provided in workplace learning. Improvisation motivated embodied awareness of oneself and others and exemplified experiential learning in workplace learning. Additionally, improvising the improv training allowed facilitators to meet the needs of the employees in workplace learning. This study demonstrated how improv in workplace learning aligned with an understanding around organizational learning and learning organizations. This study included a discussion of future research on the integration of improv in workplace learning.
Keywords: improvisation, workplace learning, experiential learning

"Building on the Ideas as Opposed to Tearing Down Ideas": Improviser Facilitators' Contributions to Workplace Learning

Improv and improvisation refer to a spontaneous theatrical art (Halpern, Close, & Johnson, 1994; Napier, 2004; Spolin, 1999; Zaunbrecher, 2011). For example, readers associated with American television comedy may be familiar with a modern representation featured on The CW network called *Whose Line is it Anyway?* (IMDb, 2015). *Whose Line is it Anyway?* shows performers developing scenes or skits without advance planning, based on a prompt given from outside of the ensemble (IMDb, 2015). So how did this performance art often associated with comedy (Halpern et al, 1994) make its way into the business world?

A growing body of practitioner literature (Bernard & Short, 2012; Koppett, 2001; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2008) and studies (FitzPatrick, 2002; Miner, Bassoff, & Moorman, 2001; Vera & Crossan, 2005) have addressed the incorporation of improvisation in business. Business curricula in higher education have also integrated improv tenets and exercises (Aylesworth, 2008; Huffaker & West, 2005). Some organizations have employed improv performers turned facilitators to design and implement training workshops (Quintanilla, 1999; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2008); in fact, a substantial income source for some improv organizations comes from corporate entertainment and trainings (Quintanilla, 1999). As time progresses, this spontaneous art form has continued to establish a place offstage in workplace learning.

The majority of literature incorporating improv offstage in business has been practitioner based. Limited research exists on the role and value of the improviser in workplace learning and more largely adult learning. The objective of this study is to examine trained improviser facilitators' uses of improvisational strategies in workplace learning.

This study is significant in developing an understanding of improviser facilitators' experiences in workplace learning and the functions, improvisational tenets, and strategies served in organizational learning. The knowledge gained in this study may prove valuable to companies' training and development departments, improvisational organizations offering training to businesses, and educators in adult education. Companies and improv facilitators may draw from this study's discussion of techniques used to cultivate receptive learners, experiential learning environments, and flexible, learner-centered trainers. This study also adds to the understanding of cultivating organizational learning and learning organizations, as improvisation in workplace learning personifies both. Through a basic interpretive qualitative approach, this study sought to answer the following research questions: 1.) What are the experiences of improvisational professionals using improv in

workplace learning?, and 2.) According to participants, what function does improvisation serve in the context of workplace learning?

Important Components of Improvisation On- and Offstage

To begin to understand the functions of improv facilitators in workplace learning, it is first important to understand the components of improvisation. The most critical element of improvisation is the participants who engage in improv. The literature refers to these participants as performers, improvisers, improvisors, or learners (Spolin, 1999; Zaunbrecher, 2011). Additional important components to consider include the rules of improv and the setting.

Spolin (1999) explained that anyone can improvise; in fact, individuals engage in improv early in life because everyone constantly reacts spontaneously to circumstances. When someone actively seeks to focus on honing improv as a craft (Zaunbrecher, 2011) he or she becomes an improviser. Then these improvisers come together, create improvised theater, and hone their skills (Napier, 2004). An improviser's learning does not cease once he or she begins to perform and apply improv in other settings (Salinsky & Frances-White, 2010; Spolin, 1999).

Improvisational rules and the underlying tenets serve as overarching guidelines for improvisers. The improvisers consider conditions and rules set prior to an improv activity or performance. Conditions include the group of improvisers, the venue, relationships between improvisers and viewers, and organizational decisions of the performance (Zaunbrecher, 2011). Specific games contain rules that can override the guiding rules of improv. For example, one improv rule is "don't ask questions" because it forces the other person to contribute when you could have contributed instead (Halpern et al., 1994). On the other hand, the improv game "questions" consists of one rule: all dialogue must be in the form of a question. In the context of the game, asking questions supersedes the guiding rules of improvisation (Halpern et al., 1994).

Improvisers should consider the improvisational setting, whether it is a stage, meeting room, or class. Improvisation differs from other performing arts because improv uses less equipment and technical systems. Improv may take place almost anywhere (Spolin, 1999). A safe environment is a requirement for encouraging participation; as a result, improv hinges on a supportive setting (Crossan, 1998; Ronen, 2005; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2010). In sum, the key elements of performance improv include the improviser, rules, and environment (Spolin, 1999). The next section builds on the discussion by addressing these and other elements involved in integrating improv into business.

Improvisation in Corporate Organizations

A review of literature revealed that companies found value in incorporating improv tenets and techniques into workplace learning and other business processes (Crossan, 1998; FitzPatrick, 2002; Miner et al., 2001). Crossan and Sorrenti (1997) outlined the connection between performance arts, corporations, and the role improv may play in business. The authors painted a picture of a company operating in a similar fashion to a theatrical performance. Plays and companies alike, they argued, functioned with a goal in mind in a set context. A company's leadership shaped the direction of the production; as a result, the CEO served as the director, the vice president's role was assistant director, and an employee's supervising manager represented the stage manager for actors. Improv performances paralleled the day-to-day business operations of a company, with actors, much like employees, playing critical roles in the process.

According to Crossan and Sorrenti (1997), the actors represented the employees. All individuals, actors or employees, performed within the context of the play or business. The production's plot and the theater's environmental factors, such as its location, serving community, and talent pool, drove the theatrical performance. Similarly, the business's objective, consumer demographics, ranking with respect to other companies, policies and systems, and other variables drove the business (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997). Workplace learning fits into this context because a primary goal of training and development is to effectively harness employees' potential to meet a company's objectives (Johnson, 1976). Organizational learning takes place in a company when employees learn, develop, and share knowledge in service of the company with the common goal to advance the organization (Senge, 1990).

With this analogy in mind, if a business functions like a play, the company has the option of constraining itself to its traditional strategic systems and concrete roles and responsibilities (Crossan, 1997; Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997). This approach, however, can inhibit innovation, flexibility, and change (Crossan, 1997). What happens to the play when the show closes? The theater company breaks down the set, and members go on to other projects. Similarly, what happens to a company when it becomes stagnant and faces challenges? Companies typically follow the same planning processes used for years, which arguably stifles creativity and does not allow businesses to keep up with an ever-changing economy (Crossan, 1997). To combat this stagnation, Crossan and Sorrenti (1997) suggested the inclusion of improvisation.

Rules and setting factors influence improvisers and improv onstage (Spolin, 1999; Zaunbrecher, 201). Improv philosophies included recognition of one's foundation (Salinsky & Frances-White, 2008) but also

embraced flexibility, creativity, analytical decision making, and new possibilities (Aylesworth, 2008; Crossan, 1997). Improv is spontaneous, so it can be unpredictable; however, considering supporting factors can influence the process and quality of outcomes (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Chelariu, Johnston, and Young (2002) created a typology linking improv and learning theory in the field of marketing as a means of dealing with the ever-changing world of business. The authors found that to incorporate improv successfully, members needed a level of improv proficiency and strategically set parameters (Chelariu et al., 2002). Improvised jazz provided an appropriate analogy because one must have a certain level of musical proficiency to improvise jazz, and for businesses, one must have a level of knowledge and proficiency in that business (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997). With this being said, one engages in reflection-in-action by responding effectively in time to new situations by drawing on his or her existing foundation (Ahmed & Al-Khalil, n.d.; Schon, 1987).

Crossan and Sorrenti (1997) identified in detail four areas where proficiency was critical in determining the level of quality (pp. 167–174). First, "intuitive insight" involved one's historical knowledge and abilities in an area that could facilitate innovation. Second, "technical ability" involved obtaining required skills in an area to increase potential solutions. Third, "group dynamics" in business involved constant social interaction; thus, producing quality results required a positive culture, trust, and open, supportive communication. Finally, the authors explained the need for "motivation, awareness, and understanding." Members would not use improv if individuals and the group were unaware, not interested, or lacked understanding of improv. In fact, if incorporated under these circumstances, improv would likely yield negative results. The authors stated that organizations should use improv with caution, as improv could lead to irresponsible behavior and unpredictable results. Successful improv required a focus on process, participants' full engagement, organizational memory, and a supportive and experiential organizational culture (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997).

Members can develop improv proficiency, and it is the manager's responsibility to nurture the process (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Improvisation can occur at many levels of planning and implementation (Miner et al., 2001). Three situations in which organizational improvisation often occurs are as follows: when creating and revising strategy, when facing a crisis or disaster, and when providing metaphors for unconventional perspectives (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997). Improv can play an important role in learning and skill development at individual, team, and organizational levels (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997; Miner et al., 2001). This study adds to the exploration of integrating improv in business by examining improviser facilitator uses of improv as a tool in workplace learning and the functions they perceive improv serves in the context of workplace learning.

METHODS

Guided by a review of literature and a pilot study, the researcher employed a basic interpretive qualitative approach. This approach draws from phenomenology (Husserl, 2012) and symbolic interaction (Mead, 1962). Phenomenology is the study of purposely developing understanding from interpreting experiences (Husserl, 2012). Symbolic interactionism deals with individual learning as a product of social engagement (Mead, 1962). Learning is active and, depending on context, both internal and social (Mead, 1962; Vygotsky, 1993). The constructivist frame denotes that an individual's understanding and knowledge come from one's process of development, meaning from experiences in engaging in the world (Vygotsky, 1993). This study investigates improvisational facilitators' experiences and the perceived functions improv serves in workplace learning. As a result, a basic interpretive qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because it centers on how individuals create and draw understanding from internal and social experiences (Husserl, 2012; Mead, 1962; Merriam, 2009; Vygotsky, 1993).

Embracing a basic interpretive qualitative method encourages various approaches to collecting data (Merriam, 2009). Past studies exploring improvisational philosophies and practices offstage informed this study. These studies examined experiences through interviews, observations, and reflective journaling (Elsey, 2007; Miner et al., 2001). A pilot study also served to further refine design decisions. For example, the pilot study included interviews and participant observations. Observations presented a challenge in obtaining consent and in scheduling; therefore, participant observations are purposefully absent from this study, which focused on conducting interviews.

The researcher interviewed fifteen improv facilitators and one nonimproviser from an improv organization's business side. Interviews ranged from 50 to 120 minutes, with the average interview lasting 70–75 minutes. The researcher also collected data via facilitators' short reflection papers on a typical training and artifacts, which included marketing materials, lesson information, and online résumés and bios.

To identify emerging themes, the researcher employed open, axial, and focused coding. Axial coding allowed for noting tentative categorical connections (Saldana, 2009), and the researcher used focused coding to get to the meaning behind the connections or disconnections (Saldana, 2009). The researcher employed three techniques to enhance trustworthiness: member checking, employing an outside auditor, and developing an audit trail. During interviews, the researcher checked with participants to confirm accurate understanding; furthermore, during my examination of initial descriptive findings, the researcher requested that some of the participants review the findings and make correction to provide clarity around his or her meaning. Both these

approaches were used to ensure authenticity of my interpretations. The researcher also kept an audit trail and employed an outside auditor to enhance trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

FINDINGS

The functions an improviser facilitator provided in workplace learning included the following themes: 1) improv motivated embodied awareness of oneself and others in workplace learning, 2) improv exemplified experiential learning in workplace learning, and 3) improvising the improv training allowed for meeting the needs of the employees in workplace learning. Participants explained that improv provided employees with a heightened sense of awareness during trainings. Improv facilitators also discussed that their adaptability in delivery provided a service, as it involved accepting feedback and changing to meet the needs of the situation.

Improv Motivated Embodied Awareness of Oneself and Others in Workplace Learning

Improv facilitators discussed that employees experienced embodied awareness through the incorporation of improvisational tenets. One improv tenet that every participant discussed was a safe, judgment-free learning environment. The literature also echoed the importance of a supportive setting (Crossan, 1998; Ronen, 2005; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2010). Participants explained that within this environment, employees developed the skill of developing self-awareness and being others focused—another tenet of improvisation. With this embodied awareness, employees experienced the skills their employer wanted them to develop.

Cultivating a Safe, Supportive Setting. Participants explained that at the beginning of a workshop, they addressed the ground rule of suspending judgment, which fostered a safe learning environment. Improv facilitators worked with employees on developing internal awareness. The facilitator challenged employees to consider the state of mind in which they entered the training; such states could be excited, nervous, afraid, or suspicious of the workshop's relevance and application to their work. Participants noted that sometimes, individual employees' fear inhibited them from effectively participating in improv games and connecting improv tenets to the company's goals. Improv and adult learning writers both addressed fear in learning as a major challenge for learners (Halpern, et al, 1994; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2008; Smith, 1982; Spolin, 1999).

If a facilitator does not construct a safe environment, learners will self-negate and not grow (Ronen, 2005), which inhibits the objective. In building on one's self-awareness, employees are challenged to, as Eliza explained, "get out of their own way" and recognize that it is acceptable to be afraid and to fail. Participants explained that performance improv embraces failure as a gift, because failure provides the opportunity for creativity and innovation. Improv facilitators managed employees' fear and other negative emotions by constructing a safe learning environment through suspending judgment, providing a workshop overview, promoting the tenet that all choices are correct, and explaining that learning occurs through failure. In a judgment-free space in improv (Spolin, 1999) and business (Crossan, 1998), individuals will challenge themselves to progress beyond their comfort zones with their colleagues.

Self-Awareness and Becoming Others Focused. Once improv facilitators established a safe space and obtained agreement from employees, the participants worked on developing skills around becoming others focused. In improvisation, the contributing members are at the core of the work (Spolin, 1999; Zaunbrecher, 2011). Employees cannot be others focused if they are not aware of themselves or allowing themselves the freedom to experience and learn, because they may spend the entire training reflecting internally, unable to connect and build with peers. Gary emphasized, "improv is all about the group, improv is not about me." Philip also discussed during a follow-up conversation that being others focused was not solely an employee goal. Improv facilitators also must practice what they preach and be others focused during a training, which echoed Rogers and Freiberg's (1994) facilitator ideals. Educators should focus on the student and learning process and not on themselves and their instruction; an educator should be receptive and open to adapting to students' needs (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Improv facilitators must lead by example, embody the improv tenets and their foundation, and draw from employees' feedback. This further demonstrates drawing from components of improvisation onstage (Halpern et al., 1994; Zaunbrecher, 2011) and offstage in business (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997).

All participants noted the others-focused tenets helped businesses in team building and interpersonal communication. Eliza discussed the service improv provides in business by noting, "[W]hat it gives is an understanding to the employee, the importance of valuing others." Writings addressing the employment of improv in multiple settings explained that improv motivates individuals to focus on others in the group and to work together toward a common goal (Echle, 1991; Halpern, et al, 1994). This promoted group development and further reinforced a safe learning space (Echle, 1991; Maples, 2007; Spolin, 1999). Eliza further elaborated on the meaning and actions required in truly "valuing others." She explained,

> [W]e talk in great depths about the idea of really listening to someone. Into what does that means, and how difficult that really is. And the idea of, how can we create a culture where we're building on the

ideas as opposed to tearing down ideas, and that's not going to be a great fit for every single organization.

Eliza's discussion of "valuing others" in business provided a lens in understanding the alignment between organizational learning and a learning organization (Illeris, 2004). A company culture constructed to value group learning includes collectively recognizing and valuing each employee's ideas so the contributions play a role in group learning; as a result, this construction of knowledge represents a learning organization (Senge, 1990). When a company hired improv facilitators to hone team building and others-focused skills, employees engaged in meaning making within a company context and in service of the business, which denotes organizational learning (Senge, 1990). Eric echoed Eliza's rationale and richly described how improv assisted employees in embodying awareness of others to enhance business. Eric noted:

> So much of the business world now comes down to individual relationships. Whether that's internal or external, how well do I work with the people that I'm working with? And how well am I listening to serving my client? And how well am I understanding my place and other people's place in this endeavor, whatever this endeavor is? Those things are all served by improv, if I'm more aware of my skills, and more open to the possibility of growth. And I can constantly be in the space of improvement and adjustment. If I'm truly appreciative of what I bring to the table and what other people bring to the table, then I see everybody's participation in a slightly different way. And if I'm really engaged and listening and focused in that way, I am putting aside my own agenda to serve my client or my coworker or whatever, that other person. Those are all improv skills.

Eric's reflection on actively engaging and listening while striving to move beyond personal desires represents the improv tenet of others focused. Putting others first signifies a key component in building an improv ensemble for performance (Halpern et al, 1994), which translates to developing a learning organization in business (Senge, 1990).

With all this being said, participants also addressed a concern expressed by employees with regard to the tenet others focused. The improv facilitators explained an ideology of individualized success in business. Similar to Eliza's disclaimer, "that's not going to be a great fit for every single organization," they provided a disclaimer that the tenet others focused does not work in all company environments. Crossan (1998) explained that some may struggle to embrace the collaborative aspects involved in improvised learning because Americans promote individualism and competition.

Implementing improv challenges groups to develop trust in teams and work as a collective toward common goals (Crossan, 1998; Spolin, 1999). Tim spoke to this tension: "Usually, or at least the perception is, it's an either/or. That if I'm going to succeed, I have to put myself first, before the ensemble, before the rest of the team." As a response to this concern, improv facilitators addressed that a value in being others focused is that when a group is successful, so, too, are the individuals within that group. Tim explained that the improv organization he worked with provided examples of group and individual success:

> [W]hat we've shown is that you can have both. You can be really effective as an ensemble. That's why we are where we are. But you can also then take all you learned there and go on to greater things, onto individual success. So that's the paradox.

The rationale surrounding improv's focus on others suggests that if the ensemble or employee team thrives, then individuals succeed. With that being said, if each member of the group does well, so too does the larger organization.

Improv Exemplified Experiential Learning in Workplace Learning

Another component of embodied awareness is a side effect of improv's being different from traditional training, such as lectures, presentations, videos, and training manual delivery. Participants explained that all those approaches showed rather than allowed firsthand experience of the content for the employee, and that this was often the reason that businesses desired improv trainings. Jeremy explained the difference between the improv workshops and traditional training approaches by noting, "[I]mprov is a lot like learning how to swim. You can have a PowerPoint about all you want, but if [until] they get into the water you really won't understand." Participants discussed how improv provided experiential learning, which allowed employees to hone additional skills while also becoming others focused.

The hiring company determined the target skills. Participants noted that when employees engaged in skill-building experiences, such as improv games and role play, it increased the likelihood that they would retain the content. Philip explained, "The fact that improv workshops are experiential usually means that they resonate longer." Michael also supported the idea of improv's enhancing retention by highlighting, "they are actually absorbing content better than if they just sat in a room and just listen[ed] for five or eight hours." Improv provided employees with the opportunity to connect through social engagement in events (Kolb, 1984) and

encouraged employees to work together to construct knowledge (Smith, 1982; Vygotsky, 1993). Philip further discussed how improv assisted in intangible skill development, such as active listening; Philip explained:

> [T]o be engaged in exercise, which gives you the experience of active listening versus nonactive listening, gives the term active listening meaning that it wouldn't have if I simply stood at the front of the room and said it's important to actively listen. Then, when I say active listening, you have an experience that you can associate with that as opposed to just its being a buzzword.

In improv training workshops, employees experienced the company-determined skills of focus with other members. Improv facilitators also challenged employees to critically reflect on the improv experience, which, they argued, further enhanced understanding and retention for the experiential skill building. Reflective questions and discussions inspired employees to link improv tenets to work experiences and personal life. These reflective experiences referred to reflection-in-action (Schon, 1987) and drew on members' existing knowledge, skills, and interpersonal connections (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997). Collaboration and reflective opportunities in the workplace allowed individuals to learn from others and make meaning for themselves (Sawyer, 2004).

Improvising the Improv Training Allowed for Meeting the Needs of the Employees in Workplace Learning

Improv facilitators richly discussed that improvising within workplace learning facilitated meeting the needs of the employees. Improv facilitators possessed honed improvisational skills of adaptability and flexibility, which they demonstrated on stage when developing spontaneous scenes (Salinsky & Frances-White, 2008; Napier, 2004; Spolin, 1999). They explained that, when assuming a facilitator role, they continued to develop these educator skills; as a result, they adjusted, dropped, or added in improv exercises and methods of debriefing as a response to information acquired from the employees while training—a process unavailable when trainers adhered to a strict plan. Kathy highlighted, "[I]mproviser trainers, as opposed to any other trainers, are deeply prepared to not only adapt in the moment" but also "adjust the training as needed for the room." Improvisational philosophies and approaches allowed the facilitators freedom to customize the exercises and discussions.

An improv facilitator's flexibility allowed for changes to a training plan to better serve the learning style of the group of employees. An improviser has a honed ability to reflect in time; they draw on existing knowledge, analyze a current situation, and respond as needed to the circumstances. Jeremy explained that the role of improv is to "allow the performers to tailor the training as they go." Similar to educator training, a predetermined lesson guides improv facilitators; however, Ahmed & Al-khalil (n.d.) found even in educator training reflective teaching practices were found to improve one's practice (Ahmed & Al-khalil, n.d.). Jeremy further distinguished between preplanned templates and an improviser's ability to adapt. He explained that a "typical training has a baked in [aspect]... like everything is prepared. ... if the conversation goes in different directions, it's difficult to then, for the subsequent activity, take that into account." Even though improv workshops drew from a lesson, the improv facilitators and improv tenets provided a component of adaptability for lessons. Jeremy illustrated this flexibility: "we're working with a group of pharmaceutical salespeople and in the first hour a specific challenge or issue comes out, because improvisation, the way that we work will naturally fold that in all of our conversations." According to participants, the improv facilitator built on the employees' feedback organically and adapted the path toward interest to reach the final destination, i.e., the company's desired area of focus. This incorporation of employees' foundations allowed them to draw on proficiency outlined by Crossan and Sorrenti (1997), which enhanced the quality of the experience. The participants recognized employees as active participants in the learning organization (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Senge, 1990).

These customizations came in the moment, as a reaction to how the employees responded to each step along the path to reach the goal. Participants noted that by allowing this, employee investment and engagement increased due to the creation of personal connections. It is important to note that, even though approaches shifted, areas of focus of the training did not change; rather, the path to reach the final destination changed.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the function the improvisational facilitator and improv served in workplace learning. Participants discussed creating a safe, judgment-free learning environment. In this atmosphere, employees experienced personal, embodied awareness. Employees also collaborated experientially while developing the skill of being others focused in addition to honing skills predetermined by company leadership. This study added to the dialogue around drawing on industry knowledge and skills (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997) to integrate improv into workplace learning. Improv facilitators also identified instances of employee learning, which aligned with the understanding of learning organizations and organizational learning.

In improvisation, organizational learning takes place though an ensemble's development and the ensemble's goal of building better performances for a larger organizational purpose (Napier, 2004; Ronen, 2005). In a business context, improv facilitators worked with employees on becoming others focused and enhancing company skills together; as a result, improv in the performance arts and workplace learning context represented

examples of a learning organization (Senge, 1990). Organizational learning denotes employees engaging in meaning making and sharing information with the goal to advance the company (Senge, 1990). Improv facilitators worked with employees on developing meaning individually and collaboratively in a workshop through skill building and debriefs; however, the learning is for a company-determined goal. Improv for performance and workplace learning serves a larger organization role, which represents organizational learning. Additionally, as many businesses embrace competition rather than collaboration (Crossan, 1998), an improv facilitator working with employees on a team-focused culture cultivates a learning organization.

Learning organizations promote more knowledge developing from a team rather than an individual person (Senge, 1990). Participants echo this idea with their discussion of the improv tenet "bring a brick," which notes a project will progress further if everyone contributes small portions rather than one person trying to do it all. For this knowledge to enter into the realm of organizational learning, all parties must share the information for service of a company (Illeris, 2004; Senge, 1990). The integration of improv in organizational development requires individual employees to be willing and engaged, and the training should draw from organizational memory (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

Suggestions for Future Research

The incorporation of improvisation in workplace learning is not a new phenomenon (Bernard & Short, 2012; Koppett, 2001; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2008). Some participants noted a wider acceptance of the uses of improvisation in business, which indicates that previously, there was more resistance. The literature review revealed applications, necessary company proficiencies, and recommendations for incorporating improvisation into a company's organizational culture (Chelariu et al, 2002; Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997; Vera & Crossan, 2004). This integration represents a long-term initiative. The researcher suggested further research on company's long-term work with improv facilitators. It is unclear from this study how many companies currently repeat this form of training, but participants noted increasing interest, which leads to the opportunity for more long-term relationships with companies.

As improv proliferates within businesses, the researcher suggested studying the long-term effects of training using improvisation within a business. Long-term employment of improv facilitators in workplace learning provides an opportunity to observe the effects over an extended period of time, with regular company participants and documentation of the experiences of improv facilitators and employees. Additionally, evaluation surveys following each workshop collected by some improv facilitators provide data for document analysis. These surveys potentially shed light on employees' learning through improv over time. The literature review suggests studies examining improv's integration into an organization's everyday culture; as a result, a potential area of research includes the examination of long-term exposure to improv and the question of whether improv facilitators play a role in this process.

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