

Traveling Course

Council of Chapters



Course Title:

Quick-thinking, Confident, Communicative, and Collaborative: Fundamentals of Applied Improvisation for (Bio)statisticians and Data Scientists

Instructors:

Richard C. Zink, PhD, Principal Statistical Fellow, JMP Statistical Discovery LLC

Course Length:

Full day or half day. In-person.

Abstract:

(Bio)statisticians and data scientists are technically proficient. This should come as no surprise, since their education focuses on developing quantitative scientists of the highest order. However, this leaves little opportunity for the development of interpersonal skills which are often just as important to one's success, particularly in a multidisciplinary environment. Ironically, many of the skills leading to technical success, such as planning, meticulousness, and specificity can stifle innovation, limit awareness, and inhibit communication. But all is not lost! Applied improvisation is a novel (and fun) way to pursue and practice interpersonal skills that are un- or under-developed.

Applied improvisation, the application of the principles and tools of improvisational theater in non-theatrical settings, has been used for decades in business schools to assist students in developing and expanding quick thinking, confidence, communication, and collaboration. Similar training is used to help clinicians, healthcare workers, and scientists better engage their patients, collaborators, and non-technical colleagues. Improvisation skills aid leaders to be eager servants to their team, exhibit vulnerability, communicate more effectively, and create an atmosphere where individuals can think and share freely.

This professional development course introduces individuals to applied improvisation from the perspective of a fellow quantitative scientist. Through several physical and verbal exercises, participants explore interpersonal skills such as creativity, (cont.)

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(cont.) spontaneity, adaptability, courage, and storytelling. Briefings examine how exercises reinforce various competencies for the workplace. Resources for further reading and training are provided.

There is no requirement to be funny, though funny often naturally happens! No experience is required, just an open mind, an eagerness to participate, and a willingness to take risks in a supportive environment. If you want to increase confidence, react more effectively to unexpected events, engage your colleagues with active listening, and build ideas through active collaboration, then this short course is for you!

Course Requirements

1. No A/V is required though a flipchart and marker would be ideal for writing a few concepts.
2. There will be some handout material detailing the exercises that we will perform and some details on resources for further reading and training. This would be in lieu of the typical course slides.
3. Up to 20 individuals can be accommodated at one time. Should the course fill up, I could consider teaching a second session.
4. Room set up should have up to 21 chairs (which includes a chair for the instructor) set up in a circle. Nothing else is required. A minimum of 500 square feet would be ideal for this many people.
5. Noise could be a factor, so this should be considered when placed near other classrooms.

