

*How Teaching Math Is Like Improv Theater*

**Mike George**, Borough of Manhattan CC



Michael George is an assistant professor of mathematics at Borough of Manhattan Community College. He received a MS in applied mathematics from the University of Washington and an Ed.D in mathematics education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

When I first began to take classes in theater and comedy improvisation, my motives were largely creative and social, though there was some supposition that my mathematics teaching (at a community college) could benefit as well. Students are known to tout their favorite teachers as "funny." Taking improv classes would presumably loosen me up a little at the board and make me more confident about my stage presence, thereby helping to facilitate the occasional joke or witty aside that could make for moments of shared humor between me and the class. Now, some years and many improv classes later, I have come to recognize that the art of improvising and the art of teaching share fundamental themes. In fact, I believe that they can be seen as crafts that share some fundamental rules.