

DRAWDOWN

ACT UP!

DRAWDOWN SOLUTIONS

Resource Sheet

DRAWDOWN ACT UP!

'Drawdown' carbon to reverse global warming

'Act Up' through interactive games and skits to activate top solutions

Learn the science behind the solutions and how to activate these in your daily life

The creation of this curriculum has been funded in part through Inside the Greenhouse project at CU Boulder



University of Colorado
Boulder



Devising Drawdown Skits with Students

Resource Sheet for Teachers/Facilitators

This resource sheet is meant to help you, the teacher or facilitator, guide students in devising Drawdown skits. You *don't* need to go through every stage in this resource sheet with your participants. Reading through this will likely give you some useful tools and vocabulary.

Devising: Creating a performance from the ideas of your participants.

Skit: A short comedy sketch intended to educate or inform.

What so Funny?

This list may be useful to students as they consider how to tweak their decided content to pull out the comedy in a wide variety of skits communicating Drawdown solutions. There are certainly more ways yet to be discovered by your students.

- Fully committing
- exaggeration
- introducing one ridiculous idea into an otherwise logical world
- surprise
- clever recognition of a truth

DRAWDOWN SOLUTIONS Resource Sheet

- anthropomorphizing ideas, forces, natural objects, animals
- imitation (such as the human being mechanical or the mechanical being human)
- when absurdism seems more logical than logic
- specificity in detail, not vague notions
- the body, its involuntary sounds, smells, protrusions, foibles, and failures
- honesty
- failure, continually failing, each time in a different way, to do something simple
- social inversion, such as the child being the parent, the parent being the child
- word play
- timing

Why use comedy to communicate Drawdown solutions?

Our research makes evident that student participation in creating good-natured comedy helps students positively process negative emotions regarding global warming, sustain hope, and grow as communicators of climate. These findings are from a practice-focused study that shares primarily the self-reported results by students of a project offered over one semester. These findings show promise in the exploration of comedy for students to process emotions that allow joy, fun, and hope to sustain their commitment to grow as climate communicators.

Osnes, Beth, Max Bokoff, & Patrick Chandler. "Good natured comedy to enrich climate communication." *Comedy Studies*. 10:2, 2019, 224-236.

Boykoff, Max and Beth Osnes. "A Laughing Matter? Confronting climate change through humor." *Political Geography*. 68 (2019) 154-163.

Research: The most creative force on Earth!!

Once the youth chose a Drawdown solution as the subject of their skit, have them research that solution (<https://www.drawdown.org/solutions-summary-by-rank>), and as it is experienced within your local context. Ask them to watch for interesting hooks or aspects that could be focused on and played with in a skit. To pull out the humor, look at something with a fresh perspective. Example: if creating a skit on solar energy in Phoenix, AZ, you might look at excessive sunshine through the lens of an oil spill. You may have someone running around trying to gather excess solar energy that is spilling outside the solar energy facility. After their frantic attempts, someone may finally conclude that the result of this energy spill is just another beautiful sunny day, thereby resolving the "crisis" and commenting on the greater environmental safety found in clean energy forms. This skit could be funny based on its full commitment, its exaggeration of the idea of a solar energy spill, and because it introduces one ridiculous idea into an otherwise logical world. This idea, although ridiculous, reveals a truth about solar energy in a fresh and amusing manner.

Useful Questions

Invite each skit group to answer these questions together:



For more embodied activities for youth engagement with drawdown solutions
 visit: <https://insidethegreenhouse.org/content/draw-down-act>

DRAWDOWN SOLUTIONS Resource Sheet

What is the action? What happens? Keep it simple. There should be one primary single action occurring (example from above: cleaning up a solar energy “spill”)

- be specific, not vague
- try and make the action something that actually happens, not something that is just talked about
- Are there multiple tactics or strategies that the actors attempt to achieve this action? Remember, failure can be funny!

Who is doing the action?

- Identify the characters and give them some qualities/descriptions—Example: A new janitor is hired at the solar energy facility and is asked to clean the place up. In their earnest attempt to do a good job, they attempt to clean up excessive spilled solar energy.
- A useful way to **describe your character** is to answer the question, **“what do you want?”** Ask each participant to answer as their character. Example: I want to be a great janitor.

Where is the action taking place?

- Describe the space specifically and give it some qualities—Even if the audience never know where the specific place is, it helps for the participants to know while they create the scene.

When is the action taking place?

- What time of day or what day of the week or month can influence your scene. Decide on a time together.

What is at stake?

- Why is this important? Who are the stakeholders? To whom is this important? It may be beneficial to some and undesirable to others—Example: employees may want to receive an increase in their wages, but the greedy owner may see their increase as a threat to the business's profits—Note: even though their views on the action differ, the action is still important to both of them, thus they are all stakeholders.
- An easy way to increase the humor is to increase the intensity by raising the stakes. The president is about to visit! We'll lose our jobs if we don't get this done in 3 minutes! We have to get this to the laboratory before it closes!

What is a catchy beginning?

- Start with action! It is okay if your audience doesn't understand what is going on right away. The process of discovery is enjoyable for the audience. During your skit, try and anticipate vital information your audience needs to understand what is going on, when they need that information, and why it is important.
- How can you provide background information/setting in an active way?
- What background information/setting is essential for the audience to comprehend the action and



For more embodied activities for youth engagement with drawdown solutions
 visit: <https://insidethegreenhouse.org/content/draw-down-act>

DRAWDOWN SOLUTIONS Resource Sheet



to understand what is at stake? Don't get bogged down by this—only provide what is essential. Try to **SHOW** rather than **TELL**, Example: if you want to show that two people are a mother with a young daughter, have them holding hands and the daughter swinging her doll to convey this without words.

- Example: If your skit is taking place between two eagles in the Vancouver City Dump, you could establish the scene by simply having a "Vancouver City Dump" sign in the scene.

What is a satisfying ending?

- Make sure you resolve what is addressed in the scene. It is always satisfying if you can hook back to something poised at the beginning of the scene in a fresh way. See the skit *Lettuce Plan Ahead* and notice the reference to tigers in the Rocky Mountains as an example of this: <https://vimeo.com/user41631648/review/291062881/5a9e6b4783>
- Some kind of twist, pun, or surprise can be very pleasing at the end and can add to the comedy and the feeling of completion

*Remember, anything imaginable is possible!

- If you want to have the action freeze and have a character step out of the freeze and comment on the action, you can! If you want one character in the scene to be a dragon with a bad cold, you can (careful of the combustible sneezes!). One character could have a rewind button that reverses time. Another character may be able to read minds. A chase scene may be performed in slow motion. It might start snowing during your scene. Be sure there is a reason or justification for these flights of imagination. You don't necessarily need to build a ship on stage for your scene to occur on the water. You can simply have the characters bending their knees together to enact the rocking of the ship in the water to transport your audience's imaginations to the high seas.



For more embodied activities for youth engagement with drawdown solutions
 visit: <https://insidethegreenhouse.org/content/draw-down-act>

DRAWDOWN SOLUTIONS Resource Sheet

Improving your scene

Once the scene is created, make improvements. Are there places in your scene that can be cut or tightened? Can you increase the intensity of certain parts? Can you allow for funny moments? Where are opportunities for improvement? Be sure you are including enough vital information about your Drawdown solution without weighing down the comedy with too much. This is the most challenging and fun part! Here is an activity that can help visualize this challenge:

How to balance the funny with environmental messaging, or in other words, how to make the comedy float? Place a single helium balloon in the middle of the room floating at the ceiling. Tie a loop at the end of the ribbon that was hanging down from the balloon. Ask what makes helium-filled balloons delightful. One answer is its ability to float. One by one, ask students to hook a paper clip to the loop and to liken each clip to a piece of environmental messaging. Too many paper clips, and the balloon gets weighed down, losing its delight. This dramatic metaphor can be useful for students when deciding how much information to include in a skit to allow it to still 'float' or be funny.

Basic Acting Directions: Be seen, be heard!

- **Project:** To project your voice means to speak or sing loudly and clearly. Encourage performers to be louder than they think so everyone can hear what is being said. It can be useful to ask performers to be twice as loud as they think they need to be. It can also be useful to have performers go to the back of the performance space to listen to others performing to understand how loud the voice needs to be to fill the entire space. If performers rehearse with a projected voice, they are much more likely to use a projected voice during performance. If performers will be using a microphone to amplify their voices, have them practice with these so they are comfortable with them (even if they just use a pen or water bottle to pretend they are holding a microphone during rehearsal).

Cheating Out

- To cheat out means to turn your body and face towards the audience while addressing another character in a scene. If two characters are speaking to each other in performance, ask each to turn out towards the audience so their faces and bodies can be seen by most of the audience. Unexperienced actors often will put their back to the audience or simply face their scene partner without consideration for the audience's sightlines. Be sure that performers who are not speaking also cheat out since the front of the body is often most expressive. You also want to be sure performers do not block the audience's view of the action.

Using Costumes and Props

- Fabric, cardboard props and signs, costumes, and other decorations can all add to the performances. We encourage you to use what you have available, including recycled materials or items you make yourselves. Never underestimate how much humor can be derived from costumes. Cardboard wings tied with string around the necks of two eagles having a chat can add enormously to the visual pleasure and the comedy.



For more embodied activities for youth engagement with drawdown solutions
visit: <https://insidethegreenhouse.org/content/draw-down-act>

DRAWDOWN SOLUTIONS Resource Sheet



Final Considerations

Have Fun and try to not overload participants with too many directions

- Best to determine for yourself what is most important and focus on that. Once that is mastered, add the next consideration. Get as far along as you can, building up one improvement at a time.

Have a guide in place for sharing critiques of each other's work

- It can be useful to establish simple guidelines for sharing feedback together. One useful guide can be to start each piece of feedback with the words "what if..." That way any comment is simply being proposed as a possible choice, rather than a criticism of what was done. EG: "What if you ended the scene sooner?" Or "What if you acted more surprised when you find out who she is?"

Be sure your comic skits reflect your values

- Sometimes when student begin working with comedy, they can unintentionally lean on stereotypes that can be limiting or even hurtful for certain individuals or groups of people. As facilitator, you can help guide them towards characters that are funny, but not at the expense of someone else.

Guide with questions rather than answers

- Instead of providing your opinion or solution, ask open questions to guide their own process of making choices. The *process* of authoring the skits contributes to the participants' growth and understanding just as much as the final sharing of the final *product*. As a facilitator, encourage, invigorate, challenge, support, and celebrate!



For more embodied activities for youth engagement with drawdown solutions
 visit: <https://insidethegreenhouse.org/content/draw-down-act>