

CHAPTER 2

You and Theatre



Chapter Outline

- LESSON 1 ♦ Believing in Yourself 29
- LESSON 2 ♦ Working with a Group 34
- LESSON 3 ♦ Artistic Discipline 42
- LESSON 4 ♦ Evaluation 45

Spotlight on Terms



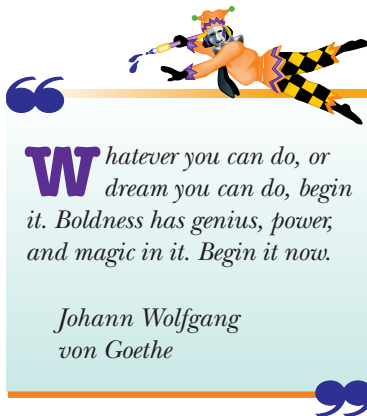
- ♦ artistic discipline
- ♦ authentic
- ♦ evaluation
- ♦ cooperation
- ♦ criteria
- ♦ critique
- ♦ ensemble
- ♦ evaluation
- ♦ group process
- ♦ interpersonal relationships
- ♦ performance evaluation
- ♦ respect
- ♦ risks
- ♦ self-confidence
- ♦ self-image
- ♦ self-talk
- ♦ trust

F

or many of you, Chapter 1 was your first experience with any aspect of drama. As a cast member you discussed many parts of the wonderful world of theatre. You might not have realized the impact of our history on theatrical performances or acknowledged your own personal experiences as an excellent source for theatre arts activities.

In Chapter 2 the focus is on you—your development as a positive person, and your responsibilities in this class. The first two lessons will generate experiences that will enable you and your classmates to grow emotionally, academically, physically, and socially. You will develop team spirit and ensemble skills through cooperation and respect for yourself and each other.

Your participation is crucial to the success of your theatre arts experiences. This is why your teacher will provide a theatre curriculum and safe environment in which you can actively get up in front of others without the fear of rejection and failure. The theatre skills you learn in this chapter will help minimize these fears, which are common for all people. These skills can be applied to other experiences and situations in your everyday life.



Believing in Yourself

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of self-confidence and the importance of positive self-talk.
- ◆ Participate in activities that will improve your self-confidence.
- ◆ Acknowledge similarities and differences in others.



In your theatre journal, write two positive statements about yourself. Look around the room and choose three of your classmates. List their names in your journal, and write two positive statements about each of them.

self-confidence

belief in your worth and abilities as a person.

self-image

the way we see ourselves.

Self-confidence, belief in your worth and abilities as a person, is the key to success. Throughout this course, you will participate in activities that will help improve your self-confidence. The course will provide you with opportunities to explore and imitate life in a positive and safe environment, which will help build your self-confidence. If you have confidence in yourself and feel accepted by others, you will be able to face each day with a positive outlook.

Having a Positive Self-Image

We all have a self-image. Your **self-image** is the way you see yourself. Usually, your self-image depends on your everyday relationships. If you get negative feedback from your friends, family, and teachers, you will most likely have a negative self-image. When the people you see every day give you supportive feedback, you develop a positive self-image—that is, you like who you are. We all have a need to belong, to be connected to someone or something positive.

Positive feedback from your "team" gives you a good self-image.



respect

consideration for and acceptance of ourselves and others, including other people's property, backgrounds, and opinions.

Self-image is directly linked to respect. A positive self-image is possible only if you have respect for yourself as well as for others. Having **respect** means being considerate and accepting of yourself and others, including other people's property, backgrounds, and opinions. Self-confidence also improves as you learn to appreciate and understand other people's personalities. No two people are exactly alike. In choosing your friends, you probably select people whose likes and dislikes are similar to your own. But to maintain those friendships, you must recognize and respect the many ways in which your friends are different from you.

If we all practiced the principles of respect, the world would be a safer, happier place to live. In fact, many experts believe that there is a direct link between negative self-image and certain crimes. Therefore, in helping to improve people's self-image, theatre can be valuable to society.

The Power of Positive Self-Talk

For most of us, our families, friends, and teachers have made a positive difference in our lives and how we feel about ourselves. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the people who tell us good things about ourselves could be with us to give us pep talks and protect us at all times? Unfortunately, this is not realistic. Each of us must be responsible for his or her own self-talk.

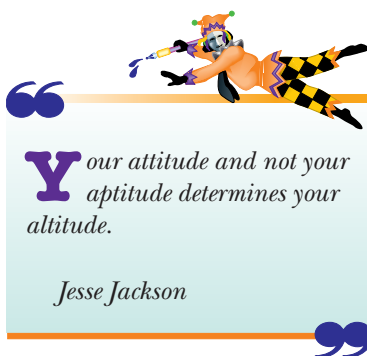
self-talk

mental comments and opinions we repeat to ourselves constantly.

Self-talk is the mental comments and opinions we repeat to ourselves constantly. It is up to you to put forth positive thoughts about yourself. If you give yourself negative thoughts each day, then all you will have are negative thoughts—about yourself and others. When you constantly put yourself down, everything probably seems to go wrong—from schoolwork to friendships to your life at home.

Positive talk must begin with one person, and that person is you. Believe in yourself! To have a good self-image, you have to believe in your

You can make a difference,
whether onstage or off.



abilities. In theatre, you will find concepts and activities that will help you feel good about yourself. With a stronger self-image, you may have a greater desire to learn and accept responsibility. You will also have more fun while participating in all the subjects you are required to take.

The power of positive self-talk is truly remarkable. Extraordinary accomplishments and lasting friendships are the result of a strong self-image. Great inventions could never have been completed without determination and an inventor with an “I can do it” attitude.

When you were small, you learned to walk, talk, and even ride a bicycle for the first time. You couldn’t have mastered these tasks without a positive attitude and encouraging words. The good grades you make are not the result of negative thoughts, but rather positive thoughts and words. The football team that wins a championship always has a positive coach and teammates as well as fans who believe in the team. The successful theatre activities and performances in which you’ll participate will be the result of positive talk and action.

We all have many talents, but often we don’t recognize them. Theatre class will give you the chance to use your special abilities. You may not be the best singer in the class or play an instrument, but you may be really good at operating the sound and light equipment. Or you may be just the person to organize the efforts of others. You may be the most responsible person in the class and be assigned to take care of all the props for a production. Perhaps you can follow a script well and mark cues. Or you may have the gift of being the best listener and observer in class. Everyone has special skills and talents, and theatre class can help you develop yours.

We all need to feel that what we say and think has value and matters to others. This is vital to your theatre experience because theatre is co-operation. You will belong to a team, a theatre troupe that will feel like

a family. You will have opportunities to develop your special talents as your teammates develop theirs. For everyone to grow, it will be important to hear everyone's ideas equally. In theatre activities, you will be given a chance to express yourself in a safe environment (without being judged). You will have fun and success participating in theatre activities. And with your efforts and the support of your classmates and teacher, you will believe in yourself!

It has often been said that the first step to making friends is liking yourself. After you accept yourself, it becomes much easier to accept others.

ACTION



Try these activities to reflect on and improve your self-image.

- 1. Positive Self-Reminders.** Every day, read the positive journal entries that you write about yourself to remind yourself of what a special person you are. Keep adding positive statements to your journal. Try to become aware of those times in your daily life when you use negative self-talk so that you can guard against it in the future.
- 2. Self-Collage.** Make a list of some of your likes, dislikes, and traits that make you the unique individual that you are. Next, choose materials for a collage (a collection of pictures and words from magazines or other printed material). The pictures and words that you choose should reflect your personality. Bring your collage materials to school. Then cut and glue them to a poster board (you may use part of the board or the whole piece). Be creative with the shapes you cut, overlapping the pictures in different directions. Use captions to reflect your personality. Keep the activity positive! You can laminate your collage as a classroom decoration or for your own room at home.
- 3. Class Comic Book.** Make a class comic book of personal events. Fold a sheet of typing or drawing paper into six sections. Draw in the most important events in your life. Use only positive events from your life. Examples might be your first day of school; losing your first tooth; a special birthday, holiday, or vacation; learning to ride a bike; getting a favorite pet; being elected to the student council; winning an academic contest; an athletic victory; or making the honor roll. How good you are at drawing is not as important as the events you choose. Share your page with your classmates. Your teacher will collect all the pages and form a class comic book.
- 4. Positive Back Talk.** Each person in class should tape a piece of paper on his or her back. Everyone should walk around the room and with a pencil write a positive comment on the paper of each classmate. It is not necessary to sign your name. Keep the comments positive! After the activity, take your "back talk" sheet off your back and read it to build your self-confidence. Follow up on this activity by making a journal entry on what surprised you most on your sheet.
- 5. Classmate Similarities and Differences.** Write down the names of your classmates on a sheet of paper. Make two columns, one labeled "Similar," the other "Different." Write down one similarity and one differ-

Confidence in yourself helps you appreciate what you have in common with your classmates. It also helps you respect what is different.



ence between you and each classmate. Then have a class discussion about the similarities and differences in the class. The discussion will help you appreciate what you have in common with your classmates and at the same time help you respect the differences that people have. This activity will help bond your class. Follow up on this activity by writing a contract that all of your classmates will sign, promising to focus on common bonds and respect for differences.

- 6. Self-Identity Sack.** Bring three items from home that represent your personality. (These items must be able to fit in a lunch sack.) Place the items into a decorated lunch sack. Don't let your classmates see the items. All paper sacks need to be placed on a table when you enter class. The contents of each sack will be revealed by the teacher or assigned students, and the class will try to guess whose sack it is. After the activity, use the sacks for a class bulletin board.
- 7. Personality Clue Game.** Write something unusual about yourself in sentence form on a sheet of paper. For example: "I have nine people in my family." "My family went to Europe this summer." "I take karate lessons." "I always sing in the shower." "I like liver." Do not put your name on the paper. Fold your clue and put it in a box. Your teacher will pass out the clues to the class, each person receiving only one clue. Now everyone will become a detective and try to find the person that matches his or her clue. After all the clues have been matched, talk about them in a class discussion.
- 8. Self-Identity T-Shirt.** Bring a T-shirt to class to make a shirt that fits your personality. At the top of the shirt, write a word that best describes you. On the left sleeve, draw or write something that you do well. On the right sleeve, write or draw something that you like about being your age. Write your name in large letters in the center of the shirt. On the bottom left, draw or write something you wish you could do. On the bottom right, draw or write something you do for a hobby. After the shirts are completed, have a fashion show. Discuss modeling postures and poses for the

fashion show. Your teacher or you could select some music to accompany the fashion show. Add other designs and be creative to make the shirt your special possession.

LESSON 2

Working with a Group

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Define group process.
- ◆ Participate in the group process by using cooperative activities.
- ◆ Develop drama skills and techniques through the use of warm-ups and theatre games.
- ◆ Build ensemble and team spirit.
- ◆ Take risks in a safe environment.
- ◆ Develop trust among your classmates.

Warm Up



Energy Circle

Make a large circle holding hands. The leader, chosen by your teacher, begins a squeeze of the hand of the person to the left that continues around the circle until it comes back to the leader. Alternate directions of the squeeze, then send squeezes around in opposite directions, letting them cross. The purpose is to work together and keep the flow of the squeeze in rhythm. Watch the energy fly!

“Go, team, go!”

“Go! Fight! Win!”

“We’re number 1!”

“United we stand. Divided we fall.”

“We’ve got spirit! Yes we do! We’ve got spirit! How about you?”

So what are all the yells, excitement, and energy about? Building team spirit helps you to connect to a group. You may already know about team spirit from other groups that you belong to, such as a basketball or volleyball team, a dance troupe, or even a debating team. Or possibly you are a member of 4-H, a rodeo club, Scouts, or a church group.

In this lesson, you will become part of another dynamic group—your theatre class. In this class, you will experience learning that is accepting, supportive, and fun! What’s more, you will build lasting friendships and memories that you will always cherish.

The Group Process

The group process can be especially effective in helping you relate to your classmates in theatre class. Your social skills will gradually improve, making it easier to get along with and work with others. Your level of participation in the group process is key to improving your individual skills and your group’s productivity.

Exactly what do we mean by group process? The **group process** involves two or more students taking a step-by-step course of action and making decisions together that are aimed at achieving certain goals. This process generates experiences that will enable you to change and grow emotionally, socially, physically, and academically. You will learn to take **risks**—actions that are different from everyone else’s. And you will participate in activities that require you to trust your classmates.

group process

two or more people taking a step-by-step course of action that takes place over a period of time and is aimed at achieving goals.

risks

actions that are different from the norm.

OUR THEATRE HERITAGE

Historical and Cultural Perspectives



Greek Theatre

You can go to a play almost anytime you choose. Hundreds of plays are performed almost every night of the week all across the United States. Your opportunities to see a play would have been very limited, however, had you lived in Greece around 400 to 500 B.C.

In ancient Greece, plays were performed only a few times a year at religious festivals honoring Dionysius, the Greek god of wine and fertility. The festivals were held to honor Dionysius in the hope that he would bless the Greeks with many children, rich land, and abundant crops.

An important part of the festival was the dramatic contest. At first there were contests for drama only, but later contests for comedy were added. The first such contest is thought to have taken place in 534 B.C. The winner was Thespis, from whom we derive the term *thespian* (which is still used today to refer to an actor). Other famous winners of the contests were Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides for drama, and Aristophanes for comedy. Of the hundreds of plays written by these famous Greek playwrights, only forty-some remain today. Among those plays, *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles is considered one of the finest dramas, and *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes is perhaps the best-known Greek comedy.

Athens was the center of the Greek theatre. The most important festival of the year was the Great, or City, Dionysia which was held in late March to the beginning of April in the Theatre of Dionysius. This open-air theatre was built much like today's large football or baseball stadiums. Since each play was performed only once, the theatres had to be large enough to hold thousands of people. Historians believe that as many as 14,000 to 17,000 people might have attended each production.

So that all the audience could see, the theatre was built into a hillside. The performance took place on the ground level, a circular floor called the *orchestra*, and the audience extended all the way to the top of the hill. Some historians believe that the audiences were made up exclusively of boys and men. Other experts believe that women and even slaves might have attended.

Since there was no electricity for lighting, sound, or special effects, the plays began early in the morn-

ing and lasted until the sun began to set. Imagine the excitement in the air as people prepared to spend an entire day at the theatre.

Many of the Greek actors wore lightweight masks. These masks made it easier for the actors to change characters quickly. Since the first Greek actors were all men, the masks also made their portrayal of female roles more believable.

Much of the action of the Greek play was song and dance by a group of young men and boys. This group was called the *chorus*. Thespis is credited by most historians as being the first playwright, and perhaps the first person, to have stepped out from the chorus to recite the first solo lines, and thereby become the first actor.

The type and style of theatre performed in the United States today can be traced all the way back to these ancient Greek plays given in honor of Dionysius. What better indication of the importance of Greek influence than the fact that such key words as *theatre*, *drama*, *tragedy*, and *comedy* all originated with the Greeks? ■



Can you imagine yourself as a Greek actor or chorus member appearing 2500 years ago in an all-day performance before thousands of people? Would you rather have been a member of the chorus or one of the first actors to speak your lines alone, all by yourself on centerstage?

trust

the ability to risk expressing yourself in front of your classmates without fear of being ridiculed.



.....
The group process makes everyone a winner.

interpersonal relationships

the contacts a person has with many different people.

ensemble

a group of people working together cooperatively.

cooperation

the act of working together, getting along, and sharing responsibility.

Trust is the ability to risk expressing yourself in front of your classmates without fear of being ridiculed. You need to be able to trust that your classmates will be supportive, and you must be supportive in turn. Only then can your classroom become a safe environment in which to experiment while you are actively learning.

Benefits of the Group Process. The group process offers many benefits to a theatre arts class. You will feel challenged and motivated, eagerly waiting to explore the next theatre adventure. You will find a positive, enriched, and caring environment that will give you a sense of belonging. You will feel involved, included, and of value to others. You will share responsibility and understand the importance of accepting responsibility. You will develop respect for yourself and others and develop attitudes that value individual differences.

There is power in learning with a group. Together you will learn problem solving, organizational skills, and decision-making skills. The group will work together to accomplish goals and tasks.

The group process is an invitation to express your opinions, and you will have many opportunities to share your talents and resources with team members. Moreover, you will learn how to adapt the group process to other school subjects and everyday life situations.

The group process will also allow you to develop **interpersonal relationships**—the contacts you will have with the many different people in your group activities. The satisfaction of working well together is the key benefit of the group process in your theatre class.

The emphasis on group process will make your theatre arts experience different from most of your other educational experiences. In fact, the group process may turn out to be your favorite aspect of theatre arts.

Building an Ensemble

Building an ensemble is essential in theatre arts. An **ensemble** is a group of people working together with mutual respect for one another. An ensemble not only performs together but creates together. The members of an ensemble practice **cooperation**, working together, getting along, and sharing responsibility. Each member is willing to help the other and strive to do his or her best for the good of the group.

Getting a group of people together doesn't mean that you have an ensemble. A true ensemble doesn't happen in one class period. As you work together throughout the course, the stronger your ensemble-building skills will become.

The positive self-talk and positive self-image that you learned about in Lesson 1 are essential to ensemble building. If you have a positive self-image and use positive self-talk, your theatre group will benefit from your input as you make decisions, choices, and suggestions in the group activities. A positive attitude is critical to building ensemble in theatre and completing activities successfully.

Don't be afraid of embarrassing yourself. According to Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, speaking in front of others is the number one fear of students, and most people experience this fear many times in their lives. The activities that your

A good ensemble is creative,
responsible, and cooperative.

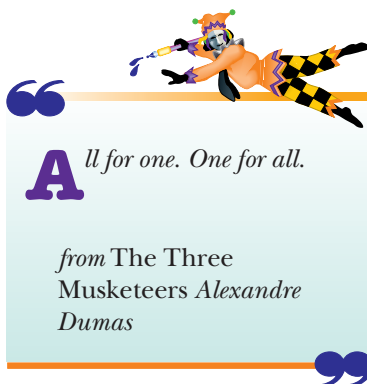


group will share will allow you to “let yourself go” and give it your all, without the fear of looking foolish.

Remember to think as a group and be a team player. The participants need to support each member of the group and work together to achieve the group’s goals. The key to building an ensemble is to create a group in which each member knows and cares about all the other members. In that way, all the members feel comfortable expressing themselves in various roles—acting, directing, managing, designing, and playwriting. The process of ensemble building must also include evaluation, which you will learn about in Lesson 4. Giving opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of individual and group work, and doing so in a tactful way, is a necessary part of the process.

Guidelines for Building an Ensemble. For the ensemble to work and the team spirit to grow, you and your classmates and teacher must set guidelines. Here are suggested guidelines for your ensemble:

1. Always have respect for the feelings, backgrounds, and property of others.
2. Practice attentive listening.
3. Use nonverbal as well as verbal encouragement for your teammates. Keep the positive energy flowing, and praise others often.
4. Avoid put-downs. No one deserves verbal abuse.
5. Keep the activities G-rated. The classroom is no place for inappropriate remarks or ideas you might use to get laughs. This means following the general school rules about language and behavior.
6. Actively participate in the team effort whenever possible. But also know that you can choose not to participate at times. Be a silent



All for one. One for all.

from *The Three Musketeers* Alexandre
Dumas

As an effective member of an ensemble you should speak up and offer suggestions when you have an idea that you think would improve the group's performance. You must also be good at listening when other members of the ensemble are voicing their ideas.



“

If you treat an individual as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German poet and playwright

”

observer if you choose. Your silent observations can be as valuable as your active participation.

7. Remember to share responsibilities and accept responsibility.
8. Be a thinker as well as a listener and talker.
9. Use the four **F** formula for success: Be **F**air (don't show favor in making judgments), **F**riendly (be on good terms with others), **F**irm (don't yield easily to pressure), and **F**lexible (be able to adapt to new situations and ideas easily).
10. Don't let your teammates down. Always do your best!

Assuming Your Role in the Ensemble. The activity or assignment given to your group will determine the type of role you will have. Your teacher may have a variety of duties for you to perform to complete the activity. The acronym *COPER* can help you identify possible roles in your group. (An acronym is a word formed from the first letters of another word.)

C for Checker: The checker makes sure that all teammates understand the activity.

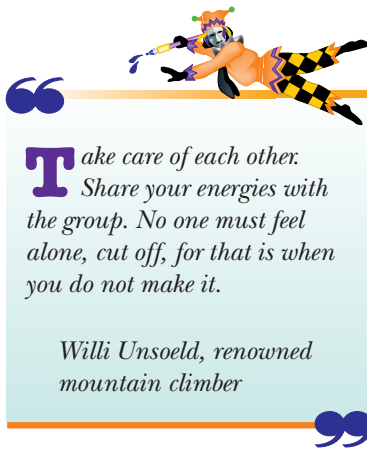
O for Observer: The observer records what the group is doing, making notes and observing all details. (Two teammates may be needed for this role.)

P for Praiser: The praiser praises good ideas and teammates to keep up the team spirit and to promote self-confidence.

E for Encourager: The encourager encourages all the participants and makes sure that everyone is participating.

R for Reader: The reader reads aloud the activity or assignment.

Did you realize that, by coincidence, *COPER* is short for *cooperation*?



Take care of each other.
Share your energies with
the group. No one must feel
alone, cut off, for that is when
you do not make it.

Willi Unsoeld, renowned
mountain climber

Preparing for the Activities

Use your creativity to get motivated as you participate in the group activities. These activities will include warm-ups, theatre games, and cooperative activities.

Warm-ups will be provided throughout the book. They are designed to get you ready mentally and physically for theatre activities and performances. The warm-ups should help relax you and reduce any fears that you may have about getting involved in your group or performing in front of others.

Theatre games are activities that give you opportunities to express yourself creatively and to develop your acting skills on stage. The games and cooperative activities provide a participant avenues in which to connect, communicate, respond, experience, and explore with other students in theatre situations. They will help pave the way to successful preparation for your future performances.

Theatre games can help you explore what it means to live in a cooperative society. In games when you make choices, you are practicing making choices in real life. You can take the cooperative spirit you learn in theatre arts class and use it in your everyday experiences. The games are designed to encourage cooperation rather than competition. They create an environment in which you feel valued by others because your input is needed for the game to continue. Teammates learn to trust and support each other. One person's success in a theatre game is everyone's success.

Theatre games can help you tap into your talents, producing unbelievable changes in you. In her book *Theatre Games for Rehearsal*, theatre expert Viola Spolin explains that games provide an important rehearsal technique for groups throughout the world. In theatre class, warm-ups, games, and cooperative activities are all methods of resolving production problems.

In theatre arts, as in life, people have to learn to work together. The purpose of the activities is to begin building the team spirit—the ensemble we have been discussing. Have fun!

ACTION

Warm-Ups

- 1. Balloon Blow-Up.** Pretend that you're a deflated balloon. On a signal from your teacher, "blow yourself up" to fullest expansion. Don't be afraid to make sounds in the process. At the end, when your teacher "pops" each balloon, spin crazily and loudly all over the room. Remember not to invade someone else's space while you are doing this activity.
- 2. Ready? Ok!** Your teacher will call out an activity for you to act out—for example, "Let's all shake hands." First a leader shouts "Ready?"; then everyone shouts "OK!" and begins acting out the activity. After several suggestions from the teacher, you and your classmates begin suggesting activities to perform. Possible examples: playing tennis, brushing your teeth, jogging in place, and flying a kite. This is fun because you get to shout and fill the classroom with energy.

Try letting your group “guide” you while you’re blindfolded. Do you trust them?



- 3. Lift Off!** Divide into groups of three. One student stands in the middle with hands on waist, palms facing down. The other two students stand on each side of the student in the middle, holding that student's wrists and arms gently but firmly. On a count of 3, 2, 1, lift off! the students on the sides lift the student in the middle. As the students on the sides lift the middle student, it is the responsibility of the middle student to jump up. Be careful! The middle student can be lifted extremely high off the floor. The feeling of being lifted is like being on the moon, where gravity is weaker than on earth. Now take turns being the student in the middle.
- 4. Trust Tour.** Divide into pairs. One partner should then volunteer to be led with his or her eyes closed or wearing a blindfold or mask. The other member of the pair leads the person for 5 minutes, taking very good care of the partner. After 5 minutes, switch roles. Reflect with your partner about how this activity felt. What was scary? What made you feel secure? Develop trust with your partner by doing and talking.
- 5. Acting Companies.** After dividing into groups of four or five, create a name for your company, group, or family. The names could relate to Broadway shows (for example, Cats, Sharks), movie titles (E.T., Jurassic Park), popular songs, popular musicians, or cartoons. Your teacher will change your group often to give you the opportunity to work with everyone in the class. That classmate to whom you never really spoke may become your best friend.
- 6. Body Tangle.** In groups of seven to fifteen students, join hands, making sure that you have two different people connected to you, causing a body tangle. Working as a group, don't let go of hands, but untangle yourselves into a circle.

Theatre Games

- 1. Two on a Draw.** After being divided into groups of two, you and your partner should take one marker, pen, pencil, or crayon and one sheet of paper. You may not talk to each other before or during the activity. While

These students are working together as an ensemble. What do you think is going to happen next?



your teacher plays a 3- or 4-minute song in the background, you and your partner should hold the drawing tool simultaneously and (without speaking) draw any picture together. When finished, have a class discussion, answering the following questions:

- a. What did you draw? Does it represent anything?
- b. What did you learn about sharing and cooperation?
- c. Who was the leader in your partnership? How difficult was it to share the leadership?
- d. How did you feel when you realized that your picture was going to be something? Or did it turn out to be an abstract?
- e. Why did you like or dislike this activity?

2. Who Started That Action? Your teacher will pick one student to go outside the room. The class then forms a circle, standing or sitting. While the student is out of the room, decide which student in the circle will be the leader. The rest of the circle will follow this student's actions. When the student outside the room comes back in, he or she stands in the center of the circle and tries to identify the leader. Remember not to look directly at the leader or you will give the leader's identity away. The leader tries to change the action when the student in the center looks away, looking for the leader. The class must work together smoothly to keep the student in the center guessing which person is the leader. After two guesses, the leader reveals his or her identity. The class then starts the game again.

3. Moving an Imaginary Object. Working in groups, choose a large, imaginary object to move from one place to another. Each member must be actively involved in moving the object, using gestures (no words). When the presentation is over, the other students must guess what the object is.

4. We Are Where? After dividing into groups, think of a place anywhere in the world and discuss some of the activities that could happen there.

Your teacher may have a list of locations to choose from in case you can't decide on your own. One member of your group (in a designated acting area) begins doing an activity specific to the place. Your teammates then think of different activities and act them out, so that the entire group is participating. When the scene is completed, your classmates try to guess where the place is and identify the activities being performed there.



Artistic Discipline

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Define artistic discipline and understand its importance in theatre class.
- ◆ Demonstrate social discipline in dramatic activities.
- ◆ Practice and develop organizational skills.
- ◆ Accept the responsibility that comes with freedom.

Warm Up



Answer these questions in your theatre journal:
What is discipline?
Why is discipline necessary in the home? at school? in your personal life?

artistic discipline

maintaining a balance between group cooperation and individual integrity.

Maybe you enrolled in theatre class because you heard that it was fun. To most of us, the word *fun* means little or no work. Theatre is fun, but it is also hard work.


It is possible that you will decide that theatre is the hardest class you have ever been in because it requires self-discipline and self-control. Self-discipline requires order and management in your daily activities. Motivation for this type of discipline comes from within a person. For example, you may not have to be told to clean up your room; or, perhaps you know you must study to pass a test; and any athlete who wants to excel knows that he or she must practice and “go the extra mile.”

In the arts, self-discipline leads to artistic discipline. Artistic discipline is more demanding than self-discipline. **Artistic discipline** involves maintaining a balance between group cooperation and individual integrity. Actors, musicians, dancers, and visual artists must train to perfect their crafts, and hard work, commitment, and dedication are essential ingredients. A passion (inner drive and determination) for theatre, dance, music, or visual arts is an integral part of artistic discipline. For example, it isn't unusual for people in the arts to spend hours each day perfecting their skills. Many choose to study their art during the summer in camps, workshops, and seminars, often beginning their study at 7 A.M. and continuing until 9 P.M. Clearly, these individuals have a high degree of artistic discipline.

The theatre activities in which you will participate will give you a certain amount of freedom that you might not experience in some of your other classes. With freedom comes responsibility. It will be your job to accept this responsibility with a mature attitude. Responsibility has its rewards (for example, being allowed to work on costumes alone or being in charge of the tickets for a performance). But you must take such responsibilities seriously.



Artistic discipline develops from self-discipline. Sometimes in theatre class, you will have to accomplish tasks by yourself using the skills you have learned.



“
Freedom is not what you like, it is what you want; but you cannot have freedom to express yourself until you have discipline.
 Dame Ninette de Valois
 ”

While in this class, you will be assigned a variety of theatre projects. Many activities will require you to work with small groups, large groups, and even your entire class. Other projects will allow you to work at your own pace. Often, your teacher will need to work with one group while several other groups continue to work on their own. This means that you and your group will need to stay on task to complete your project. Theatre cannot be accomplished unless you remain focused on your task, even when your teacher is not standing over you.

Your teacher will introduce you to many techniques that can help develop artistic discipline. One such technique is a written contract. As in the business world, people in theatre have to contract, or make a promise, to fulfill certain desired behaviors or tasks. Your teacher might contract with you to learn a specific number of lines by a specific date, or to keep to a certain rehearsal schedule, or to follow certain backstage rules and procedures. To be a responsible member of your group, you must fulfill the requirements of your contract, whether it is written or verbal.

Developing artistic discipline requires organization and commitment. You can begin by keeping up with all the assignments, scripts, and classroom notes that your teacher gives you. A simple folder or notebook will help you get organized. Homework assignments, rehearsal information, and performance times can all be scheduled on a school calendar that you keep in this notebook. Here are just some of the items your theatre notebook can contain:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| journal entries | all written or artistic projects |
| assignments | picture and article collections |
| theatre terms | returned tests |
| handouts | play reports and play reviews |
| class notes | all scripts used |
| critique sheets from all performances, including self-evaluations | |

Keeping an organized notebook and knowing where you put it every day will help you acquire organization skills that are needed on every job. But once you get organized, you must remember to stay organized. Being organized will help you feel much better about yourself, even when you're under pressure. Remember, creativity is not born out of chaos. Creativity involves thinking, planning, imagining the unknown, and then getting into action.

Train yourself to always check your classroom “call-board” or designated assignment board for upcoming homework or other responsibilities. As soon as you see that your teacher or director has made an assignment, schedule it on your personal calendar or in your assignment book and plan a time to complete the work. It is important to develop a systematic approach to remembering and completing whatever is required of you. Turning in homework on time and remembering to bring props or costumes from home shows your teacher or director that you are trying hard to discipline yourself.

Finally, if your teacher or director gives you information to take home to your parents or guardians, take it home and return it as soon as possible. Following instructions—and doing it quickly—is an important part of artistic discipline.

OUR THEATRE HERITAGE

Historical and Cultural Perspectives

Roman Theatre

By 146 B.C., Rome had conquered Greece, and in the years that followed, Rome would gradually absorb the entire Greek world. Because their empire was so vast and their wealth so great, many Roman citizens had a great deal of free time. They didn't have to spend many hours each day growing, gathering, or earning money to pay for their food. As a result, they were a society that loved many forms of entertainment.

Greek-style theatre was only one of many forms of entertainment that the Romans regularly produced. The Romans enjoyed performances of short comedies (similar to our "sitcoms"), athletic events, music and dance, trained animal shows, chariot races, and circus performers such as jugglers and tumblers. Of the different full-length plays produced by the Romans, the comedies were much more popular than the tragedies.

The titles of many Roman plays were recorded in government and festival records, but few of that large number survive. Of the known tragedies, all but one is by a playwright named Seneca (5 B.C.–65 A.D.). Nine of his plays survive. Of these, the best known are *The Trojan Women*, *Medea*, *Oedipus*, and *Agamemnon*, all of which are based on Greek plays. The comedy scripts that have survived are by either Titus Plautus (254 B.C.–184 B.C.) or Publius Terentius Afer, who is known to us today as Terence (190 B.C.–159 B.C.).

Most of the surviving Roman plays are based upon plots of Greek plays. This practice of borrowing the main

ideas and characters from plays written in earlier periods is a practice which we see repeated by many famous playwrights throughout history. For example, the Roman *Menaechmi* was Shakespeare's source for *The Comedy of Errors*, one of his most popular scripts today.

But the Roman writers did more than copy the Greeks' ideas. They made some important changes in dramatic form. They eliminated the chorus and added music to underscore the dialogue, rather like a movie soundtrack does today.

Unlike the Greeks, who restricted the number of actors in each play, the Romans did not limit their writers to any set number of performers.

The stage setting for Roman comedy was always the same city street, regardless of the play being produced. The backdrop (a permanent stone structure known as the *Scaenae frons*) always represented the front of several houses, in which there were doorways. These doorways represented the households of the main characters of the play and served as entrances and exits. For a tragedy, this same structure would represent a palace or temple.

The Romans will always be remembered as great engineers and architects. Their strong sense of design is reflected in their theatre buildings, which were unified, free-standing structures several stories in height. These buildings were unlike the Greek theatre buildings, which were built on hillsides to utilize the natural slope of the ground for better audience visibility. ■



The Romans built enormous theatres, such as this one in Jordan, to accommodate not only plays, but also circuses and sporting events, which the Romans also favored as forms of entertainment.

ACTION



1. **Theatre Notebook or Folder.** Prepare a theatre notebook or folder according to your teacher's guidelines, or use the items suggested in this lesson. If you are using the lesson's suggestions, create (with theatre designs) a cover sheet for each section in your notebook.
2. **Cover Design.** Design a cover for the notebook or folder reflecting your interests or hobbies. This activity could be combined with the self-collage activity in Lesson 1.
3. **Theatre Calendar.** Create a calendar or assignment sheet on which to record theatre assignments.
4. **Interviewing a Professional.** Interview someone involved in theatre or another of the performing arts. Ask how that person developed and maintained artistic discipline in his or her profession. Here are some sample questions:
 - a. What training did you have that helped you become successful in your art?
 - b. Why are you dedicated to your art?
 - c. Where do you go to research your art?
 - d. What motivates you to excel in your art?
 - e. Who was your inspiration in the arts?
 - f. Is there a special time or place that makes you feel most creative?

LESSON 4

Evaluation

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Define evaluation and critique.
- ◆ Identify three types of evaluation methods.
- ◆ Evaluate and critique theatre activities in class.
- ◆ Reflect on and form opinions of drama/theatre experiences.

Warm Up



Select one of your classmates, and write in your journal why he or she is a successful theatre student.

performance evaluation

an evaluation of a performance given before an audience.

All through your education, you have been evaluated. At each grade level, someone has evaluated your participation, your work, and your progress. An **evaluation** is a judgment about your strengths and weaknesses. Evaluations have helped determine your progress in developing certain skills and have determined what still needs to be improved.

Evaluation can take many forms. You are no doubt familiar with written and oral tests. Another evaluation method is **performance evaluation**: You perform before an audience and are given a **critique**—opinions and comments based on specific criteria. **Criteria** are evaluation guidelines that your teacher will provide or your classmates will determine before the performance.

As a theatre student, you will learn to rate both yourself and others according to the guidelines on pages 47 and 48. Remember, the purpose of evaluation is not to criticize, but to help everyone, including yourself, improve.



If you want to do a thing badly, you have to work as hard at it as though you wanted to do it well.

Peter Ustinov

evaluation

assessment of strengths and weaknesses.

critique

opinions and comments based on predetermined criteria; used in an evaluation of a person or performance.

criteria

evaluation guidelines to use in judging or grading an activity.

authentic evaluation

an evaluation involving real-life situations and role-playing to test skills and abilities for the real world.



The evaluator is usually your teacher, but your classmates will also be asked to give their opinions of both group and individual work. And the most important evaluator you should learn from is yourself! Self-evaluation is difficult to do because we are usually so hard on ourselves. We seldom see the strengths in our work and performances—only the negatives. Reread Lesson 1 if necessary to remind yourself of the power of positive self-talk.

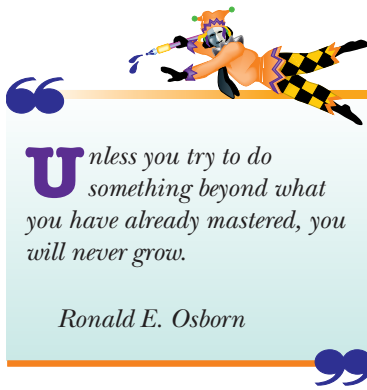
Evaluation of self is a valuable tool in theatre. It is important to understand that there is not a “right” or “wrong” in theatre. The experiences that you will have in evaluating yourself and others will help prepare you for making sound judgments in later life.

When you have completed an assignment, activity, or performance, the evaluation process comes next. It is one of the most valuable parts of this class. You will often want to hurry this part of the class and go on to the next assignment or activity, but do not rush the evaluations. Class evaluations can be stimulating and encouraging. These discussions can also be an effective learning tool. Use the evaluation process to be positive, but also use it to grow from your mistakes and identify what can be improved.

Another type of evaluation is called authentic evaluation. In **authentic evaluation**, you are involved in real-life situations and role-playing to test your skills and abilities for the real world—your future.

Most people think that the word *criticism* means only negative responses. But a critique in theatre class means forming opinions about strengths as well as weaknesses. The evaluation process will give you many opportunities to explore the world of theatre. Forming opinions and learning to make sound judgments are necessary skills for success in life.

Throughout this course, you will evaluate yourself and your classmates in assignments and activities. Before you perform for evaluation, your teacher will share the guidelines that will be used. By studying



Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.

Ronald E. Osborn

these guidelines, you will have a better understanding of what is expected of you. In giving a critique, remember that comments such as “It’s good” or “I didn’t like it” are not really helpful to the classmate you are evaluating. Use specific words that reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the assignment, activity, or performance.

Following are three sample evaluation forms.

I. Form for Performance Evaluation (Sample 1)

Be able to discuss the following criteria for the person you are evaluating. Use opinions and comments that reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the performance.

A. Group work

1. Cooperated with the group.
2. Took an active part in the group.
3. Had a good attitude.
4. Shared in responsibilities in getting the task completed.

B. Voice

1. Used correct pronunciation of words.
2. Spoke clearly.
3. Used adequate volume.

C. Body

1. Used expressive facial expressions.
2. Used appropriate posture and body language.

D. Characterization

1. Stayed in character while performing.
2. Was believable while performing.
3. Was motivated in all actions.
4. Listened to other performers.
5. Responded to other performers.

E. Overall performance

1. Was totally involved in activity.
2. Related to other characters.

II. Form for Performance Evaluation (Sample 2)

Answer the following questions in evaluating yourself and your classmates.

1. Did the actor stay focused on his or her assignments and purpose of the presentation? Discuss what he or she did to accomplish this.
2. How well did the actor project his or her voice?
3. Was the actor’s use of dialogue effective and clearly pronounced? Explain.
4. Did the actor use appropriate posture and body language? Give examples.
5. In what ways was the actor believable? Be specific.
6. Did the actor skillfully handle the props (if used)?
7. How poised and relaxed was the actor? Give examples.
8. Did the actor achieve his or her purpose? Be specific.



“Look and you will find
it . . . what is unsought
will go undetected.”

Sophocles, Greek playwright

III. Form for Authentic Evaluation (Sample 3)

The following criteria are intended to help evaluate your interview with a person involved in the theatre or other performing arts.

1. What procedure did you use in persuading the professional to be interviewed?
2. How did you determine which questions to use?
3. What was the professional's attitude toward his or her career?
4. What was the professional's attitude toward you?
5. What were the most interesting comments that the professional made during the interview?
6. What surprised you about the person you interviewed?
7. What comments did the professional make that will be the most useful to your life?
8. Was the interview a success? Why or why not?
9. Would you like to interview this person again? Why or why not?

Your teacher will discuss evaluation or critique procedures as you are assigned an activity. The critiques will vary and should have appropriate criteria for the assignments. Brainstorming with your classmates is another excellent method to develop criteria for your future evaluations.

ACTION

1. **Class Comic Book Scene.** After the class comic book is completed, your teacher will divide the class into groups of three or four for this evaluation project. Your teacher will give each group one of your classmate's comic sheets about his or her life. Your group's assignment is to create a scene depicting one of the pictures that was illustrated on the comic sheet. Everyone in the group must be involved in the scene, and an introduction or title would be appropriate before the group begins. The scene should be no more than 3 minutes in length. The class may also guess, after the scene, who illustrated the picture. Then use appropriate criteria for evaluating the activity. Use one of the sample evaluation forms, or design your own criteria before the performance.

■ ■ SPOTLIGHT ON TERMS ■ ■

An important part of theatre is understanding the terminology, or vocabulary, used. Add the new terms and definitions to the vocabulary section of your theatre notebook or folder.

■ ■ FOCUS ON FACTS ■ ■

1. What is respect, and why is it an integral part of theatre class?
2. What is the value of positive self-talk?
3. Explain the importance of having artistic discipline in theatre class.
4. Why should students learn how to evaluate their own work as well as the work of others?

■ ■ REFLECTIONS ■ ■

Discuss the following questions with your class or answer them on paper as instructed by your teacher.

1. Why is it important to continually talk positively to yourself? How can such positive statements affect your everyday life?
2. How does it feel to be encouraged each day in class? What does this do to your self-confidence?
3. What are some positive statements that you can tell yourself each day?

■ ■ THEATRE IN YOUR LIFE ■ ■

1. What people do you respect? Why do you respect them? How does this affect your relationship with them?
2. What situations can you name that could use artistic discipline?

3. How have evaluations helped you?
4. Why did you choose theatre as a class?
5. In what ways do you see yourself applying theatre in your future?

■ ■ ENCORE ■ ■

To help build self-confidence and bond with your classmates, do the following activities.

1. On a sheet of paper, list every person's name in the class, including the teacher's. Beside each name write a positive statement about that person. The statements could be about the person's hair, clothes, personality, and so on. Think about this assignment, and spend time developing a statement about each person that would build his or her self-confidence. After the comments are written, your teacher will collate them and write all the comments for each person individually. When the teacher returns the statements, keep this sheet in a favorite place to remind yourself how great you really are. This can be your personal "ray of sunshine" each day. Read the sheet often!
2. Create a theatre spirit chain by cutting a construction paper or typing paper link (12 inches long and 2 inches wide). On the link, write your name on one side and write or illustrate one or two of your best attributes (things you like about yourself) on the other side. When the class is finished, your teacher will have you staple the links together, forming a long spirit chain. Your classmates can get to know each other better with this activity if everyone shares what is on each link. The spirit chain can then be used as a room decoration to remind everyone that the theatre class has "spirit" and is "connected and bonded."