

TACT

Tactically Applied Communication Techniques For Kids

Mission Statement

To encourage and facilitate interpersonal communication among young people by implementing a program derived from the rehearsal and performance techniques used in interactive and improvisational theatre.

Objectives

- To provide useful and relevant interpersonal communication and situational improvisation tools.
- To promote a better analytical grasp of interactive situations and human expression.
- To expand personal abilities to assess, understand and respond.
- To be a catalyst for self-discovery.

TACT

Interactive Positive Assumption

An important element of TACT

Interactive Positive Assumption is a technique at the heart of participatory improvised theatre. Its effective use allows well-trained actors to spontaneously create scenes, involving both characters and audience, which extend past the boundaries of traditional dramatic expressions. The essence of the technique is finding ways to say yes, using what is given, contributing constructively to what evolves.

The principles of Interactive Positive Assumption have many viable applications beyond theatre. Its uses are of demonstrable relevance in all forms of creative expression, in business, in the community and in personal life. Wherever there is interaction among people, Interactive Positive Assumption, understood and practiced, can be of remarkable value.

The practical applications of Interactive Positive Assumption are achieved through a twofold process: Firstly, a workshop experience utilizing a variety of purposeful activities specifically tailored to suit participants, situation and desired results. These activities may include discussions, exercises, improvisations, games, critiques, demonstrations, and explorations. Secondly, a putting-into-action in the specific circumstances of daily experience through a mutual process of careful forethought and preparation, clear objectives, focused actions, considered responses, pertinent observations, and ongoing assessments.

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Interpersonal Communication

“All leadership is show business.”

--A Passion for Excellence, Tom Peters and Nancy Austin

Interpersonal communication is not something for which human beings usually receive training. Most of us have had to learn as we go. Through trial and error we have managed to muddle through our communication-requisite lives, some more effectively than others. If we are fortunate, we may have heard a lecture about or read a paper on interpersonal communication. Hands-on practical experience and training are rare.

Thanks to the prevalence of true interactive theatre since the late 1970's, techniques for actors have been developed utilizing voice, body and mind, that enable the development of improvised communication based on theme, character and objective. For actors, these techniques are used to entertain. But the techniques are equally as useful in other arenas. In any situation where people interact, those same people are putting on a performance, whether it be the street, the classroom, the office, the marketplace or the home. They are playing a character, themselves, or rather many characters, because as humans we interact differently in different situations and environments, improvising our way through the happenstances of our lives, usually with a very limited perspective on either communication or improvisation.

Until now, these applicable and useful interpersonal communication and improvisation techniques were not available to anyone outside of the theatre. But in the 1990's, theatre producer/directors Dennis Johnson and Brian Belge adapted their own successful variation of interactive theatre training to a variety of applications for persons other than highly-skilled professional performers. They named this training TACT, or Tactically Applied Communication Techniques.

The results have been, may we say, dramatic. People of all ages and in all walks of life receiving this kind of training, are finding themselves more usefully demonstrative, clearer in communication, endowed with a greater analytical grasp of situations and people's motivations, and with the ability to more effectively respond. They are able to read others and react more appropriately by building a better understanding of their own and other's expressions and the resulting indications, through workshops involving exercises, games and direct application of these evolutionary principles to the very situations they face in their everyday lives.