

**Return, Restore, Rebound:
Post-Pandemic Resource**



**Sample Pages from
Return, Restore, Rebound: Post-Pandemic
Resource**

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Return, Restore, Rebound: Post-Pandemic Resource



Theatrefolk®

Matt Webster

Return, Restore, Rebound: Post-Pandemic Resource
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e-mail: help@theatrefolk.com
website: www.theatrefolk.com

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► INTRODUCTION

The pandemic that began in 2020 fundamentally changed classroom environments around the world. Something as simple as seeing students in your class was no longer guaranteed. In addition, an unprecedented “digital divide” was created between teachers and their students, making it difficult to establish a connection and engage. Students were isolated from each other, and the rudimentary interactions that allow a class to work together and become a cohort were severed.

This lack of interpersonal connection was especially detrimental to the drama classroom. Theatre teachers emphasize interpersonal interactions to help teach the basic concepts of drama, from listening skills to creative problem solving all the way to building ensemble and empathy. These kinds of social and emotional learning qualities are the foundations of the theatre curriculum. In fact, the pandemic has taught us that the skills learned in theatre are valuable not just in the drama classroom, but across the entire curriculum. This is why it is so important to re-establish these skills when teachers and students return to classroom teaching.

This resource anticipates the challenges that await you when you return to full-time, face-to-face teaching. It is designed to provide you with materials you will need to return, restore, and rebound in your teaching space, curriculum, and relationship with your students.

This material is especially important if you are a new teacher who did not have the opportunity to complete your teacher training under “normal” conditions, but instead had to operate under distance learning protocols. Walking into an actual classroom for the first time and teaching for eight hours a day is going to be a much different experience. The more prepared you are, the easier it will be to step into that classroom and make it function properly as quickly as possible.

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► RETURNING TO THE CLASSROOM

For theatre teachers, their classroom is like their second home. Whether they teach in a regular classroom space or on stage in the auditorium, it is where connections are made and art happens. Before teachers and students return to these spaces full time, teachers will need to re-examine how the space is used and potentially rearrange the classroom to make it more functional.

Evaluate Your Space

Start your return to the classroom by answering the following questions. We've included a printable worksheet on the next few pages. See your classroom space with new eyes to best suit the needs of both you and your students.

1. What type of space do you have?
2. Will you be in the same space when you return?
If not, what has changed?
3. Do you like your space? Why or why not?
4. What was your initial reaction to seeing your space again?
 - a. What surprises you about your space?
 - b. What did you miss about your space?
 - c. What is something about your space that you've never noticed before?
 - d. If your reaction is negative, why do you think that is?
5. How did you use the space in the past?
 - a. How did your use of space best suit the needs of both you and your students?
 - b. If your answer is, "It didn't," what can you change?
6. Will you continue to use the space the same way?
If not, what will you change? What can you change? How will you reset your space?
7. What works best about your space?
 - a. How is your space functional?
 - b. How is your use of space effective?

8. What doesn't work about your space?
 - a. Are there any aspects that you just "lived with" in the past?
 - b. Can these aspects be changed? Why or why not?
9. Can the way you use your space be changed? Why or why not?
 - a. Who could you talk to about changing your space?
 - b. Is there a small change that you could do yourself?
10. What is your plan with your space for the first day with your students?

SPACE EVALUATION

<p>What type of space do you have?</p>
<p>Will you be in the same space when you return?</p>
<p>If not, what has changed?</p>
<p>Do you like your space? Why or why not?</p>
<p>What was your initial reaction to seeing your space again?</p>

What surprised you about your space?
What did you miss about your space?
What is something about your space that you've never noticed before?
If your reaction is negative, why do you think that is?
How did you use the space in the past?

<p>How did your use of space best suit the needs of both you and your students?</p>
<p>If your answer is, "It didn't," what can you change?</p>
<p>Will you continue to use the space the same way?</p>
<p>If not, what will you change? What can you change?</p>
<p>How will you reset your space?</p>

What works best in your space?
How is your space functional?
How is your use of space effective?
What doesn't work about your space?
Are there aspects you just "lived with" in the past?

Can these aspects be changed? Why or why not?

Can the way you use your space be changed? Why or why not?

Who could you talk to about changing your space?

Is there a small change that you could do yourself?

What is your plan with your space for the first day with your students?

Where Do I Start?

If you don't know where to start when it comes to setting up your space, start by defining the place where you teach.

Not all theatre classrooms are created equally

Over your career, you will have to teach in a number of different classrooms, and some of them won't even be classrooms. You could have a traditional classroom: chalkboard, desks, teacher's desk, bookcases. You could have a specialized classroom: art rooms, PE spaces, dance rooms. Sometimes you are put in a large open space: gymnasium, cafetorium, or other multipurpose room. You could teach a theatre class on the stage of the auditorium at your school, in the lobby of that auditorium, in the wings of the theatre, or even backstage.

Identify the required areas

Depending on the space you're in, take the time to identify typically required areas in a theatre classroom. Because you're dealing with a space that may or may not be configured as a classroom, you'll need to configure it yourself. For example, if you're using a large open space, a theatre space, a lobby, or a backstage area, here are some things you will need to set your space up as a classroom:

- A teacher's desk area so you can keep track of materials that come to you and that you pass out to students.
- A board or screen of some kind. It's helpful to have something you can write or project material on. Perhaps a dry-erase board on wheels that you can roll to wherever you're teaching.
- Student seating. Whether it's the fixed seating of a theatre or seating that you arrange, you'll need somewhere for your students to sit and work.
- We do a variety of work in the classroom and often that work is in groups. You'll need areas where students can sit together.
- Often, in your theatre classroom, you will need some kind of prop or costume storage. Sometimes you have a storage room attached; sometimes you are storing things backstage. But a lot of the work we do requires simple costumes, props, etc. that you'll want to have easy access to.
- A performing space of some kind. Some classrooms have an 8-by-4 or 2-by-4 based platform that is set up in the corner. Others set up in the front of a 6-foot-wide by 20-foot-deep space. If you're lucky, you have a theatre space to perform in. But you are going to assign your students performance work and you'll want that specialized space.

Discipline as it connects to classroom setup

Typically, in any classroom, the good students gravitate to the front and the bad students gravitate to the back. If you don't address this, you're going to set yourself up for some problems down the road. Also, students will look for ways to play the system. They're going to disrupt the seating, sit with their friends, and use the space in ways it wasn't intended for. Be aware of how your classroom setup will encourage disruptive behavior, and act accordingly. Know that a lack of routine usually equals a lack of discipline. If your classroom is not set up in a structured way and students walk in every day to a new look, they won't get the impression that when they walk in the door, it's time to start class and do work.

Another connection between discipline and classroom setup is this: if your room feels like a playground, students will want to play. Your classroom is your place of work. Yes, from time to time, we get to do fun things in the theatre classroom. We get to explore and be creative, but those things have to happen within the structure that says, "We take this seriously and this is all part of the routine that we've set up. This is all part of the expectation of this classroom." When students walk in and the classroom looks like a playground — chairs strewn about, costumes all over the place, props they want to play with — then you are inviting them to do just that. This applies to kindergarten through twelfth grade. Students will want to play if the classroom looks like a playground.

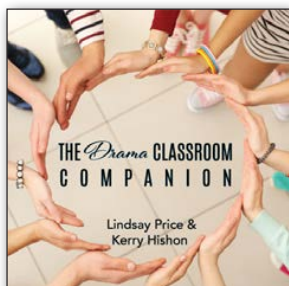
Control, efficiency, and flexibility

Ask yourself: "What do I need to do to make this a fully functioning theatre classroom?" You want to utilize the space for maximum control and efficiency, but you also want to plan for flexibility. Your classroom space will change depending on what you're teaching. Teaching acting requires a different floor plan than teaching design and running scenes requires different materials than improvisation.

1. What does the phrase “fully functioning” mean to you? How does a space become “fully functioning”?
2. If you are returning to your space, reflect on your space. How is it a fully functioning theatre classroom? What changes need to be made?
3. If you are walking into your space for the first time, write down what you see. What is your impression of the space? Then, write down what you think you need to do to make this space a fully functioning theatre classroom. What are your thoughts?

Teaching Resources

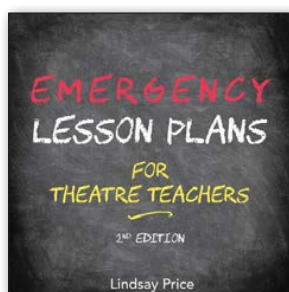
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



The Drama Classroom Companion

The Drama Classroom Companion is filled with articles and exercises to build the skills needed for theatrical performance as well as real world skills like creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

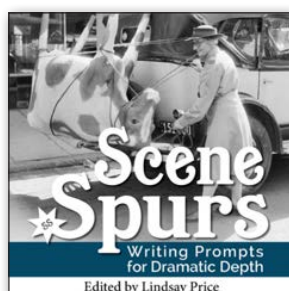
theatrefolk.com/companion



Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers

Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers, 2nd edition gives you the tools and resources you need to confidently leave your class in the hands of a substitute teacher. Customize your lesson plans to suit the specific needs of your class when you can't be there.

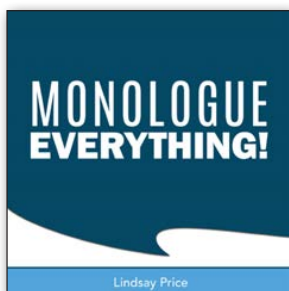
theatrefolk.com/elp



Scene-Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth

Scene Spurs is a collection of photo-based writing prompts developed by playwright Lindsay Price. The set includes 35 different Spurs along with an instruction guide to integrate them into your drama classroom.

theatrefolk.com/spurs



The Monologue Everything Program

Want your students to write their own monologues? Have you tried to incorporate monologue units into the classroom with less-than-satisfactory results?

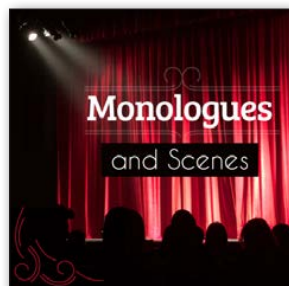
theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything



Practical Technical Theater: The Complete Solution for Technical Theater Classrooms

This series of instructional DVDs is perfect for the teacher who feels more at home with a prompt book than a hammer, and would welcome a new, visually oriented teaching tool for their tech classes and production crews.

theatrefolk.com/ptt



Monologue and Scene Collections

Whether it's for classwork, competitions or auditions, these collections of student-appropriate monologues and scenes can help you find what you're looking for.

All monologues and scenes come from published plays and include running-times, descriptions, character notes and staging suggestions.

theatrefolk.com/collections



The Student Director's Handbook

Help students take their show from first audition to opening night with *The Student Director's Handbook*. This easy-to-use ebook is full of guidelines, tips and templates designed to help students create a vision, circumvent problems and organize rehearsals on their way to a successful production.

theatrefolk.com/student-director



Write Your Own Vignette Play

Your students want to write and perform an original play. You want to include a playwriting unit in your program. But where to start? What if your students have never written a play before? What if you've never written before?

Write Your Own Vignette Play will answer all your questions and more

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Competition Material

Plays, monologues, and scenes for drama competitions including royalty information and exemptions.

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