

# INVISIBLE THEATRE PROJECT

Parkway Central High School Drama Department

To Whom It May Concern,

This year the Improvisation Class focuses on character development through the use of improvisation; acting on the spur of the moment. The students have participated in a variety of practical, hands-on activities, which have been enlightening experiences. This provides a realistic approach to theatre, which of course, is what theatre is.... an illusion of reality. For example, one activity focused on creating a character sketch. The students were told to go out into the public to physically observe strangers; their movement, mannerisms, gestures, posture, voice and dress. From this preliminary research, the students could then develop a realistic character sketch for future activities. It's this hands-on, realistic approach, which I feel is necessary when studying any aspect of theatre.

As the semester is winding down, it is important that these students are able to take everything they have learned and incorporate it into a valuable experience; one that incorporates the skills of improvisation with real life situations and results in a theatrical experience. After much research, I have found that Invisible Theatre will not only incorporate these skills, but will have a lasting impact on these students by opening doors to their imaginations.

Invisible Theatre is the art of creating theatre by allowing the spectator to get caught up in the illusion, which is actually reality. Amazingly the spectator is transformed, and becomes the protagonist in the action, a spect-actor, without ever being aware of it. Invisible Theatre must have at least a scripted core in which the actors will then improvise around to suit the interventions of the spect-actors. In order for Invisible Theatre to be successful, the chosen subject must be an issue of burning importance, something known to be of genuine concern for the future spect-actors. It is performed in a place, which is not a theatre, and for an audience, which is not an audience.

Obviously, the most important problem Invisible Theatre faces, is that of safety. Therefore, students must choose settings which they will have some control over, cautiously select topics which will not hurt or seriously trouble others and must create scenarios which are very specific. That is why I have asked each student to involve an adult to act as the "control" element of the project and perhaps take part as an actor. At ANY time you feel the project is progressing in a negative direction, you, the adult, may stop the project. The student will be given another chance to perform their project or one similar with a different person or location. Only if the student refuses to do the project at all, would he/she fail the project. It is NOT your responsibility to make this happen... it is the students.

The student/s involved, will be giving you an outline of the project, which details the issue, purpose and procedure. Every scenario is read and approved by me, with revisions made if necessary, before it is given to you to read. The student/s also brainstorm as to any potential problems that could occur and solutions to each, in order to prevent any unforeseen occurrences. Once performed, the student/s will write up an evaluation and summary of the actual events and speculate as to why the project was a success or not. Each project is then presented to the class upon completion.

Invisible Theatre is not realism; it is reality. Through this unique outlet, students can experience theatre while they experience life. As a Performing Arts teacher, I have the privilege to work with very talented, bright and creative individuals. Although, unlike some disciplines in the Performing Arts, Theatre specifically draws students who wish to take greater risks and "walk on the edge". But students must also learn the limitations of theatre as well. Invisible Theatre is a great way to push the envelope of creativity while forcing the actor to discover the boundaries of safety in a realistic situation. I find great pleasure in stimulating imaginations and I know that if done correctly and safely, Invisible Theatre will stretch the minds of these students. What better way to teach a skill than to actually experience it.

Sincerely,

Nicole C. Voss  
Theatre Director