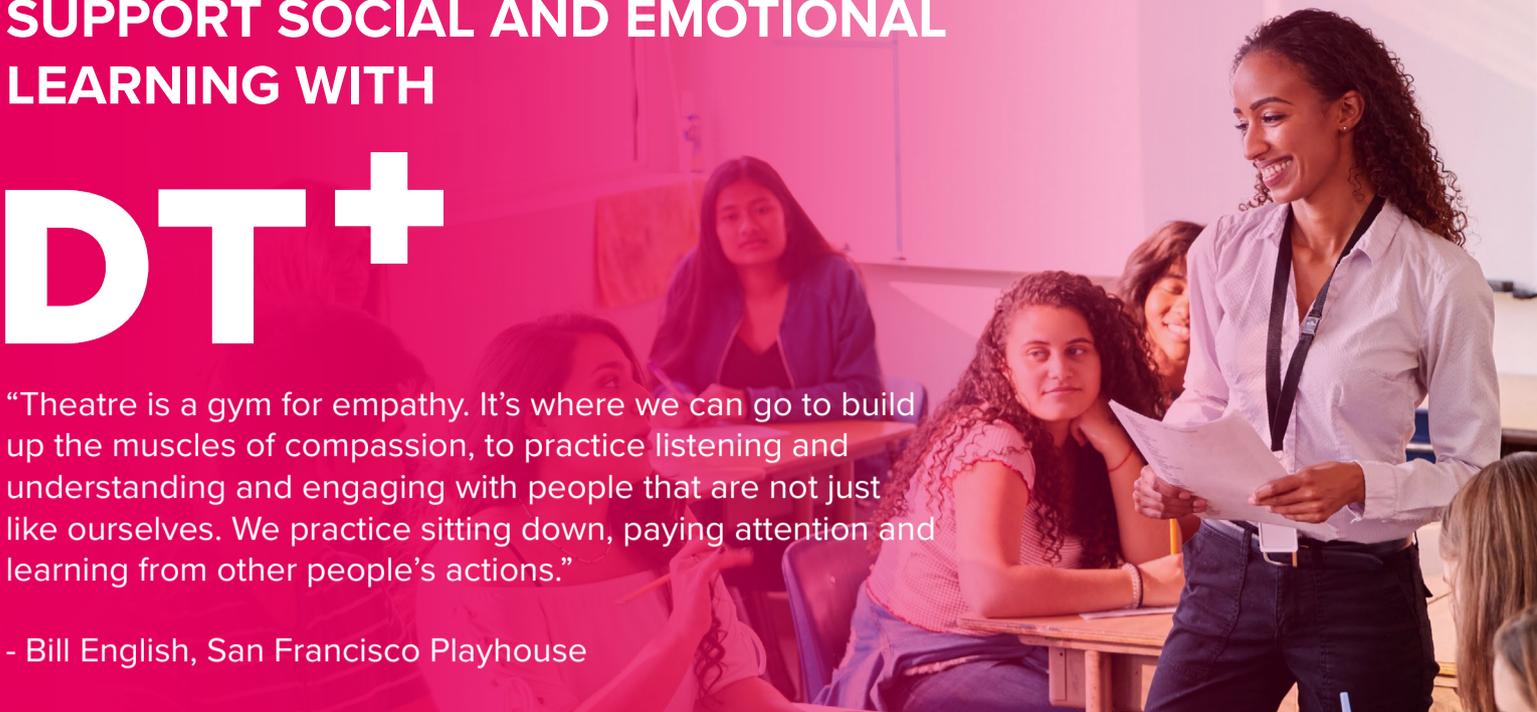


SUPPORT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING WITH

DT+

“Theatre is a gym for empathy. It’s where we can go to build up the muscles of compassion, to practice listening and understanding and engaging with people that are not just like ourselves. We practice sitting down, paying attention and learning from other people’s actions.”

- Bill English, San Francisco Playhouse



The study of theatre and literature, and the arts more widely, can have positive impacts on all five core competencies of SEL (as identified by CASEL).¹

Self-management:

Self-management: plays often contain characters that display very poor self-management - that’s why there’s so much drama! Analyzing and discussing these characters, their flaws, and the impact of their feelings and emotional responses on the story are all useful ways for students to reflect on their own emotional self-management.



Self-awareness:

Similarly, reflecting on personal experiences and the (even fictional) emotions of others leads to increased self-awareness for students. As does, for example, taking on different roles when putting on a play or staging a scene and identifying their stronger skills and areas for development.

Social awareness:

Many plays shine a light on current social issues, whether directly or, in more historical pieces, by enabling students to reflect on social and contextual differences between the time period the play is set in and today. These narratives allow students to demonstrate empathy and concern for others as they begin to understand the social context and perspectives of others.

Responsible decision-making:

Plays and particularly pivotal scenes are a great prompt for discussions of good and bad decision-making. What would have happened if those characters had made different or better decisions? Could tragedy have been averted?

Relationship skills:

A career in the theatre and, similarly, working together on theatre activities in school, requires brilliant relationship skills, clear communication, collaborative and constructive problem-solving. It also develops the ability to work together closely and effectively, negotiating and working towards a common goal.

1.<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2019-05/Arts%20Education%20and%20Social-Emotional-June2019-Consortium%20and%20Ingenuity.pdf>

Example resources that support students to reflect directly on aspects of SEL

- **Pipeline** - a play focusing on the challenges faced by Black youth in the education system
- **Romeo and Juliet** - themes of gangs, family disruption, parental control, loss, teenage love
- **A Doll’s House** - themes of marital parity, financial anxiety, change
- **The Container** - themes of exclusion, legitimacy, identity
- **Things I Know To Be True** - themes of loss, grief, parenting, sexual orientation
- **Musical Matters** - an issues-led conversation series exploring inclusivity and representation in American musical theatre
- **Othello** - themes of exclusion, prejudice, race
- **Unlocked: Community** - an accessible e-learning series where each episode clearly explores a key component of SEL through illustrative examples of productions, interviews and workshops
- **The Crucible** - themes of propaganda, social exclusion, persecution