



Worksheet 2.3: Technical and Artistic Profile

Instructions
Label the sections of this figure with the technical and artistic skills that are important for your dance performance. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for each factor by shading in the appropriate area. Scores below 8 indicate an area in need of improvement.

From J. Taylor and E. Estand, 2015, *Dance psychology for artistic and performance excellence*, [Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics].

a score below 8. Place a check mark next to each factor that you scored as 7 or below and consider working on these factors in your mental training program (see chapter 11).

For now, select three of your check-marked items to focus on immediately. It's most efficient to focus on a few areas, strengthen them, and then move on to others. First, ask which areas are most important for your development. For example, if your biggest obstacles to achieving your goals are your strength in holding a position and your flexibility, give these factors high priority.

Second, some less-developed parts of your dancing may be symptoms of other limitations. In such cases,



Instructors enhance learning by correcting and guiding.

dealing with one factor may also relieve another one without your having to work on the second one directly. For example, if you lack confidence, you may not handle adversity very well. If so, building your confidence will also improve your ability to overcome adversity.

Third, balance your immediate training and performance needs with your long-term development. Perhaps you identify motivation and confidence as the most important areas to address for your long-term future in dance. At the same time, perhaps you're also held back by struggles with focus and intensity and have an immediate need to prepare for an important upcoming performance. In this case, you might choose to work on your focus and intensity right now and address motivation and confidence over the long term.

Use the prime dance Priority Form worksheet, available in the web resource, to identify the three mental factors that you want to focus on in the near future. Then, after you finish reading the book, return to the chapters that address your selected areas in order to review techniques and exercises for strengthening them. To help you carry out this work, use the goal-setting program described in chapter 8.

You can also use prime dance profiling to measure progress in your training. Once a month, complete the profiles again and compare the results with those from your past profiles to see your improvement in the targeted areas. If you have a dance coach, teacher, choreographer, or training partner, ask that person to complete the profile based on her or his perceptions of you and of any positive changes in the relevant areas. When your ratings move above 7, select other factors to work on and follow the same procedure.



Worksheet 2.4: Priority Form

Instructions
Indicate three focus areas that you have identified in your prime dance profiles. As you improve in these areas and identify new areas for work, complete this form again to specify your new priorities.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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Center Stage: Sean

Cultivating Self-Knowledge

Sean, a 24-year-old, had been dancing professionally for a ballet company for three years. He enjoyed dancing but was frustrated by the fact that he never danced in performances as well as he did in classes and rehearsals. Sean gave his best effort in training, maintained excellent physical conditioning, and pursued realistic goals, but his performances were often disappointing. As a result, he had not progressed out of the corps as he had hoped.

Sean was confident that his training was sound and that he had no glaring technical weaknesses. A voracious consumer of dance-related literature, he began looking for articles in dance magazines to see if something was missing in his efforts. After reading an article about the psychology of dance, he realized that his problems might be mental. A self-proclaimed nonintrospective person, he began to explore the mental side of his dance and was surprised at how little he had even thought—much less done—anything about it. He completed the prime dance profiles and began to see patterns that held him back.

For one thing, as Sean looked back over past seasons, he realized that he didn't have much confidence in pushing himself, physically or artistically, during performances. True, he would *think* about pushing himself in performances like he did in rehearsals. However, he would fail to follow through on those thoughts because he was afraid that if he went to his limits, his efforts still might not be good enough, and then he would be disappointed. In other words, holding back gave him an excuse.

As he thought more about past seasons, Sean also realized that he didn't focus very well during performances. Specifically, he paid too much attention to who was watching and what they might be thinking and not enough to his own expression of the choreography. In addition, during most of his performances—especially when he had a bigger role—he was distracted from dancing his best by worries about his technique and how he appeared with his partner.

Sean applied this newfound self-awareness to his training and performances. In particular, he worked on being positive and trusting his technique and artistry while staying focused on his artistry and partners. To his pleasant surprise, his performances and company reviews improved noticeably over the season; as a result, he was given more challenging roles and even leading roles, and he had more fun than ever before.