

Holocaust drama stimulus

War



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During our first lesson, as a class we went through a slide show of different shocking pictures. These shocking pictures represented what the Jewish people had to go through during the period in which the Holocaust took place. As a class, we discussed about how we felt looking at these pictures and these feelings and emotions were going to help us create a new piece of drama later on.

The pictures that were being put in front of us made me feel disgusted, it made me feel disgusted that a whole race can happily discriminate and wipe out another race simply because they did not fit in or because they were not liked. I was shocked and angry because no one took action as no one really knew this massacre was taking place. We were going through the slide show which showed these horrid pictures of innocent women, men and even children getting killed, dead in piles of bodies or being in really bad conditions, these pictures made the atmosphere feel different; it made the atmosphere feel gloomy and depressing.

Everyone who sat in the room went from feeling happy to feeling sad and miserable but suddenly a picture of a man who was behind all of this cruelty came up, at this point all I felt was anger but I also felt pity for him. I felt pity for him because I didn't understand how someone can be this cruel to human beings. When the photograph of soldiers and one of Hitler laughing with some people was juxtaposed with the photos of the Jewish people in the camps it made me feel confused with different emotions such as anger and sadness.

This was a picture which really made me think about what Jewish people really had to go through. I could see a huge group of heartless and cold blooded German soldiers at the back watching Jews being shot in the back of the head one by one, it seemed like it was some sort of entertainment for them and this was a day to day event. While the soldiers are just watching, a Jewish man is sitting beside his own death waiting to join all the others who have already been sent down. There was nothing he could do to stop him from falling into the ‘ death whole’. I think there is some sort of juxtaposition in this picture. The soldiers who are enjoying and the Jewish who are next to their death have been put side to side despite their differences and despite the contrast between them. When we were thinking about being a Jewish person it made me feel miserable. People who were Jewish knew they were going to die one day or another, they were just waiting for their life to be taken by one of the heartless Germans, and living like this everyday with such a thought must have been horrific.

I later then used these well-built feelings and emotions to help me maintain a strong and realistic character. These feelings made me focus on the character in which I was playing; it made me focus on what the character may have felt like and what the character went through. I then used all these factors to change the tone of my voice and the way I behave accordingly and appropriately to match the character I was playing.

Task 1

After the discussion we were told to create three still images in our groups. We used all the emotions and feelings that a Jewish person may have had

and interpreted it as our own. The still images had to include a family who represented three stages of their lives;

1. Life before anything happened
2. When they received the letter about what was going to happen to them
3. The family falling into pieces

1st STILL IMAGE; Happy family before anything happens.

1. The height between each character is different. Brandon is much higher than the rest, this shows that Brandon has higher authority and is a much important member of the family, they have used height arrangements in a clever way as the audience can quickly spot out who has higher authority within the family.
2. The group uses hand gestures to try and tell the audience thing. This particular gesture shows that the family are going to eat their dinner; this is represented with the way their arms and hands are positioned. However all the hand gestures are regular hand gestures, the group should have tried using different variations.
3. Facial expression has been used to express emotion, khaled has a smile on his face; this indicates that he is happy. However this expression looks unrealistic so to make this better khaled should have done a more realistic smile.
4. Proxemics has been used by the group to show the spacing between each character. They are all tightly packed in showing a good family atmosphere.

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5. The group has tried to use their body language to show the audience that they are a family who are comfortable around each other. This is done well as they are well packed in together and are slouching in towards each other. The posture also shows the same, the way they are sitting around each other shows that they know each other very well.

2ND STILL IMAGE; this still image shows the stage in which the family has received shocking news

1. Facial expression has been used again by Brandon to show the emotions. The facial expressions that have been used by Brandon show that the family are in shock due to something that has happened or due to shocking information they have received. From this image you can see that Brandon has his face wide open while looking at the document. This has been successful as the audience can quickly spot out that Brandon is shocked.

2. Hand gestures have been used by khaled. In this image khaled look like he is holding something such as a young infant or a baby. However, holding a young infant does not fit in the scenario and it seems like it has been put there ‘ randomly’. The group should have picked hand gestures that are connected to the situation.

3. The body language and posture between Rebecca and Calleh shows that they are trying to comfort each other as they are in distress; this has been done well as they are both very low down and their head are facing downwards while holding each other.

4. Proxemics has been used again in this image to show the relationship between two individual by putting them very close to each other. From the body image of the two characters, we can tell that they are in great distress and they are trying to comfort each other by holding each other's arm.

5. The levels show you who are more upset within the family and who are in more distress. We can tell that the men are taking the situation calmly although they are in shock but the women are in more distress.

3rd STILL IMAGE; Stage in which each family member has to leave and make their own way.

1. Brandon has used facial expression; we can tell that he is not happy; in fact he is quite angry and upset about leaving everyone. His facial expressions are quite powerful as it looks realistic.

2. Their postures and body language gives a hint to the audience that they are not happy. Everyone has their head down showing that they are in distress but the character that had the higher authority (Brandon) is looking back at everything.

1. Everyone is now at the same height and stages, this shows that they are all at the same stages and shows that they all have the same values and destiny (they were all going to die).

2. Gestures have been used, each member have put out their hand, this tells the audience that they do not want to leave each other, and want to come back together as a family. Using arms as a method of connection within individuals is quite powerful.

3. Proxemics(the use of space) represent that they are all now separating from each other to go live their own lives, this is shown as they are further apart from each other and there is no way of coming back together.

This group told the audience something new, we were told that Jewish family were like any other families and they lived a normal life such as having family dinners together. Jewish families had nothing that was different from other families but due to new laws and rules they had to leave each other and it's not very easy to leave someone who is part of your family. This group have worked well as a group to show real emotions and all the gestures they have acted out were realistic making the whole performance realistic and effective.

We analysed the poem at first as a class, we could feel the tension around the classroom building up as we were going through the poem. When the poem was being read by the teacher, it felt like a Jewish boy was talking to us directly, it felt so realistic as when the poem was read out, slow and emotional string music was going on in the background making every individual feel upset and emotional. The mixture of the long and short sentences (stanza) makes an impact. Also I like that the writer has used simple use of vocabulary for such a serious situation. However, while analysing the poem I realised that turning such a serious situation into a performance was hard because we had to bring all the different emotions together.

When we then got into a group to start a performance, we chose music to accompany our performance. Our group chose music that had a slow pace to

it, this fitted in well as our performance in a whole was quite slow. However it was very hard to find unique motions for different sections of the poem.

During our performance we put a lot of emphasis on particular words, at the beginning of our performance one individual said; “ and thrown into the fire”. We put emphasis on the word ‘ thrown’ by saying it together at the same time with a strong loud voice and the person, who started the sentence alone, finishes the sentence. This made it so much powerful as it tells the audience how bad the Jewish were treated and makes the audience think. Also when shouting a powerful word out in a quiet surrounding, the audience gets shocked and feel more emotional towards the performance. When saying it we also dropped on the floor making it more effective as it was quite loud.

“ Lawyers, rabbis, wives, teachers, mothers”; we gave each word to different individual and they all said it in unison. I was sitting in the middle as a child ‘ who haddreams, then had no hope’ with each character saying one word that was a career which I could have had. After saying their career they walked off, this showed that the dream I had, has gone and I have now no hope. Saying it unison made an effect as it shows how it not only affected a group of people, but it affected every individual deeply.

We also used echoes. “ We were taken away in the dead of night like cattle in cars, no air to breathe” The lights completely switched off and we all came together in a circle facing outwards. When the light turned back on I started saying ‘ we were taken away in the dead of night’ then another individual said ‘ like cattle in cars, no air to breathe’. The other two individuals where

quietly whispering ‘no air to breathe’ creating an echo. It made the atmosphere feel tensed and spooky. We could have improved this as the lights were not switched on and off at the correct times not giving us enough time to go into our position, we should have made it clear to the person who was doing the lighting. Also as we panicked about the light we forgot few bits which we had to say together.

“Smothering, Crying, Starving, Dying”, we all had a particular word to say and while saying it got into a position. We were all in a line in a different level. The person who said ‘Smothering’ were stood higher up and the person who said ‘dying’ was completely on the floor. This showed the different stages a Jewish person went through. Saying it in unison showed that everyone went through the same stages and ended up in the same place ‘dying’. I think this really worked well as saying it in unison and doing the movement to match the word really explained each stage that a Jewish individual had to go through.

“From the ashes, hear our plea”; we said ‘hear our plea’ together as it made it more clear to the audience that ALL the Jewish children were upset and frustrated and wanted someone to listen to them. Our motion to this was sitting on the floor with our arms out looking upwards as if we were praying to have justice and for people to listen to us. I think we could have improved this by saying this together at the same time and improve our timings.

“This atrocity to mankind can not happen again”; we shouted out ‘can not’ together to show our anger against what has happened and show that this certainly cannot happen again. I personally believe this worked well as it

showed our anger because we did not shout many things out so shouting these particular words out really meant something.

At the end we all got in a line and sat down, we then each said few words from this sentence; remember us/, for we were the children/ whose dreams and lives/ were stolen away. After saying our section we looked down and the lights slowly switched off. I think this was a good end because it seemed like we came back from dead to give a message to everyone and then went back.

I believe that we worked well as a group and rehearsed well towards our performance. We had few errors during our performance in which one individual forgot to say something and some repetition were forgotten but these errors were not noticeable.