

Capital punishment – response phase essay sample



To start off the topic on "Capital Punishment" we sat in a circle and basically discussed what our opinions was of it. But it was more of a debate than a discussion. However without our knowledge sir had picked two people (Lucia and Sheldon) who were told that they were to start off the debate. This is called "Invisible theatre". Lucia's character was very against capital punishment, her character was very religious. So when other members of the class started to ask each other questions, Lucia always had an answer which was forgiveness and that the person on death row did not deserve to die. Which then made the rest of us more determined to prove our point. And on the other hand Sheldon was quieter than Lucia but he agreed with the death penalty and that made Lucia argue more.

I think this type of explorative strategy is very effective to get other people to think more and to say what they are thinking. This strategy was very effective for me because it definitely made me think more and it helped me and many other people to speak our minds.

When we did the courtroom scene it was with a larger group of about 13 of us. Giving ourselves our characters was not at all difficult nevertheless when it came to sorting out the plot it was a different story all together. We were trying too hard to come up with the story that we did not have enough time to actually rehearse the performance it's self. So when it came to performing we were making it up on the spot so the scene went down hill. Which meant that when it came to doing "thought tracking" many of us was not prepared. But if we were prepared and the rehearsals were more successful, then "thought tracking", in this particular scene would have helped us to build some kind of background knowledge of our own characters. In my group me

Daniel Johnson and Chelsey was chosen for thought tracking. Daniel and me didn't do too well when it was our turn and because I was a member of the jury and I didn't need to say much I should have spent time in thinking of what I could have set. Chelsey did well, she was the family member of the accused (Kim) and she spoke about how Kim was innocent and that she was going to be found guilty.

I don't think that this strategy was very effected because there was so many of us we didn't have enough time to think more about our characters.

However I think it would have been effective if we had had more time or if we had less people in each group.

We started off by reading an article on Timothy Mc Vaugh. We spoke about how the writer described the final minutes of Mc Vaugh's life. We were then put into groups. In my group there was Chelsey, Ronald, Miguel, Dami and David. We were told to create a tableau from anytime from the actual bombing to his final minutes. Our group decided to create a scene of when he was about to die. We quickly gave each other a character, Miguel was Mc Vaugh, I was his mother, Chelsey was his sister, Dami and David were family members of the victims who were killed, and Ronald was the guard.

We placed ourselves so that Mc Vaugh was lying on a table in the centre, the guard was standing over him and we had Mc Vaugh's family on one side and the victims family on the other, this was to show the contrast. Then the rest of the class commented on what they thought of the way we were set up on stage and each characters facial expression. This helped everyone discuss his or her different opinions of each character. Everyone commenting about

their ideas lead to one character from each group to be “hot seated”. This is when one person is chosen and he or she has to sit on chair in the centre of the stage and that person has questions fired at them. The person on stage has to stay in character throughout being question. This helps the person on stage to understand more about their character. From my group David was chosen to be hot seated and I thought he stayed in character really well. I liked the way his character was angry at what Mc Vaugh did and that he was happy to see him die but then again he knew what Mc Vaugh’s family was going through so he did sympathise with them.

I think this strategy is also very affective because even though they are making up answers on the spot it helps them and the audience to build a character profile together.

We learnt a new explorative strategy called “Track Alley”. This is when a person is given a character and they have to walk down the “alley” which is the rest of the group. The group has to be split into two facing each other and they have to be standing up straight with neutral faces. When the person starts to walk down they chose when to stop and when they do the person whom they have stopped in front of becomes the character and they have to say what the character might be thinking and also act like them. We were given many different characters relating to the death penalty. For example Kim was given the character of being a little boy who’s older brother was on death row and she created a story about her not knowing that his older brother was on death row and that he thought that he had just gone away.

I think that this strategy is very effective also because it helps give people ideas to those whom are short of ideas. This helps that person to maybe build something on top of his or her own ideas.

Development Phase

In class we were put into pairs. After we our time was up to prepare, each group had go up onstage and perform. And as usual at the end the audience had to comment on what they liked and what they could have improved. I was with Shirin. We were told that we were cellmates on death row and we had to build it from there. We decided to be sisters and that we had killed our mother.

It is a cold dark small cell with nothing but a dirty toilet on stage right.

Alex (centre) and Sandra (stage left) are eating their last meal together; it's two hours before they both die.

Sandra: Saying whilst enjoying chewing on pizza

We've always loved pizza, with chicken and sweet corn toppings. Especially with the barbeque chicken wings and garlic bread.

Alex: staring at the piece of chicken in her hand

Yeah, we have

Sandra glances over to Alex

Sandra: what's wrong? Aren't you hungry? If you don't want your pizza I'll have it.

Alex: I can't believe we did what we did, I can't believe we killed our own mother (Pause) I can't believe we are both gonna die soon.

Sandra puts her food down and walks over to her.

Alex looks up.

Alex: (shouting) Look, just take it if you're so hungry.

Handing over the plate

Sandra takes it, sits next to her and puts it down beside herself, and then she puts her arm around her.

Sandra: But that's the good thing

Alex: What is? That we killed our mum

Sandra: No, I mean yeah, I mean

Alex interrupting

Alex: then what?

Sandra: Listen sis, we had to kill her but that's not what I meant

Alex: What's good then?

Sandra: the good thing is that we are gonna die together

Reassuring her

And I promise you, when we die and I go first I will be waiting on the other side for you.

Alex: You promise

Sandra: I said didn't I?

Taking her plate

Now eat

Alex: No I don't want to, I'm not hungry

Sandra: Fine more for me

Taking a bit from the garlic bread and walking back to stage left.

Alex glances over to stage right and starts to panic

Alex: sis

Sandra: yeah

Alex: sis, the guards are coming

Guards enter stage right

1st Guard: Right Sandra, this is it, come with me.

Sandra puts her plate down, walks up to Alex where she is still sitting and gives her a hug. Alex has tears in her eyes

Sandra: Remember what I said, I'll be waiting

Alex: I love you sis

Sandra: I love you too.

1st Guard: Right that's enough come on hurry up

Guard grabs Sandra by the arm

Exit stage right

2nd Guard: Finished your meal

Alex: (pause) Yes

Guard collects plates and exits stage right leaving Alex by herself crying in the centre

Evaluation Phase

Two convicts on death row

Shirin was my partner for this particular scene and this is the scene I'm proud of the most in this term. It was easy for us to come up with a plot because it was just the two of us. We up with the plot of the two characters being sisters and they killed their mother. Our characters were total opposites; Shirin's character was the brave and loud character whilst my character was more timid and afraid. We started off by both of us facing back-to-back kneeling down in the centre and when Shirin's character became angry she stood up and started to circle me and at the end she stops with one side of the stage.

The group I enjoyed watching the most was Wumi and Sheldon's group. The scene kept everyone in suspense. I liked the way they spoke over each other so there was never a dull bit. They seemed to keep firing comments towards each other. They used the full stage and they used different body levels. They made us think that the characters were mental. I think this scene was very successful because the scene wasn't short but it didn't drag.

The courtroom scene.

We were split into two groups. In my group there was 13 of us. This was very difficult, because when it came to discussing our ideas and building a simple plot, it took quite a long time. It took a long time because whenever someone came up with an idea everyone kept disagreeing. I found it easier to not say anything at all; I wasn't really bothered about the plot I just wanted to get on with the performance especially because the other group had more time than us. A thing that did help us to get on with what we were doing quicker was that we straightaway agreed on what character everyone was. Another thing that we wasted time on was setting up the stage. This affected the rest of the performance.

It wasn't till only a few minutes before we were on stage that we actually started to rehearse what we had discussed. So when we went up on stage to perform we were totally unprepared. We had to make things up as we were going along which led to things not making sense and the scene just seemed to drag. Also because there was so many of us on stage there was hardly any room for all of us to be seen and that led to the people most of the time putting their back to the audience. Another problem with this scene

was that because there was so many of us some people like the jury members hardly said anything. I think this performance was the worst our class had ever did. Also the other group wasn't any better, I think the major problem was that no one was used to performing in big groups especially if we were used to only working with about 7 the most.

If we had a chance to do this again I would change the way we approached the scene. I would set us a time limit of which we had to come up with a plot and a time limit in setting up the stage. And then spent more time on the actual performance. If we were told to do the courtroom scene again I would prefer if we did it in smaller groups so that it would give everybody in the group a chance to participate. It will also help with having a lot more room on the stage to perform and to make things more interesting to watch. If we had to stick to the same people then I would suggest that a script of some sort would help. Because it was easy for us to pick characters so all we would have to worry about is how we presented the scene on stage. But I guess doing this will help in the future from learning the same mistakes again.

A member of the accuser's family visits the victim's family

In my group there was 5 of us. We came up with many ideas for the plot and when we decided on the final idea we got straight down to setting up the stage. We decided to locate the scene at a church at the funeral of the victim. Daniel B and me were the victim's parents, Azra was his girlfriend, Peter was the killer and chelsey was his girlfriend. In our scene the victim's parents does not know he is their son's killer and when the killer tells the father who he is, the father is very angry and wants to fight him. However

the mother interrupts and asks whom the person was but he keeps it away from her he doesn't want her to know who he is.

In our performance we used up all the space on the stage, we shared out all the speaking parts so that everyone was equal. The strongest part in our performance was when Peter told Daniel who he was. However what also spoilt this part were members of the audience sniggering and putting them off on stage. But this was another performance that I was proud of everyone worked together as a team and our performance showed so.