

Developmental process in city life

Countries



The stimulus we were provided with was that of 'city life'. At the beginning of the process we did not have a set group however Conor, Ellen, Sinead and I decided to stay in the group we were in as we all felt that we were able to work together well. To explore the different aspects of city life, we all came up with various ideas which incorporated this stimulus provided for us. The ideas which each of us came up with were a fantasy situation, school life, the London underground, London Snowdays of 2009 and everybody's late. The first idea we tried was the 'London underground'.

We found that this was a theme which worked practically however we did not know how to expand on the idea so therefore decided to leave the idea and explore another. The second idea we tried out was the fantasy idea as we thought that due to the fact we had to include non-naturalistic aspects to our production, that this would be the easiest of the ideas to try this out with. To start with we listed various fairy tales, books, movies and television programmes and their links with different city life aspects at the time of their development.

We settled on an 'Alice in Wonderland' theme after I told the group about a situation one of my cousins in which he was walking down the road once and didn't see an open manhole in front of him and ended up falling down it and breaking his leg. We decided to try this situation out along with the 'Alice in wonderland' theme in which a person falls down a manhole into another world and they'd go through a similar situation as Alice in which they encountered various representations of people or objects in their current life.

The idea we came up with we all felt that the storyline would've worked and could've made an effective piece. However when it came to trying to piece it together we found that it was difficult to do so with the lack of people in our group and the limitations of theatre which we were faced with. In the end we found this idea may have been good for a short film but in the world of A Level theatre wouldn't be possible to make. The next idea we tried was 'London Snow days of 2009'. Rather than focusing about people in the snow we focused on how the snow affected their everyday activities and the help or problems it caused for them.

The first idea we tried for this one was based upon a hierarchy system, the type of people and where they would fall within this system. The characters we came up with were; a person head of an office firm, a soldier returning from the war in the east, a wife of the soldier and then a prostitute. Each one of us spoke about which characterisation would be a form of change for each actor and then saw which each of us could do with these characters set to us. Each of us were uncomfortable with the characters at first and to overcome this we done a circle of focus in order to get us relaxed and able to settle into the characters.

We found that this idea was the most effective and one which we would be able to build upon so therefore settled on this idea. For our research we focused on locating various newspaper articles of people who were trapped by the snow in different parts of the country. One particular article we located was one of a business man who had been trapped in his office building for three days before anyone was able to help dig him out of the

snow up in Scotland where the snow at the time was a lot worse than that of the snow fall in London.

We decided to apply this situation to the office firm worker and then acted this scene out to see how it would work within our production. We found that the situation of the worker being trapped within the complex did not work however we came up with another idea of everyone being in the same setting and the snow fall around them being really heavy and therefore the characters would be trapped together in the same room. We also did some research into the soldiers who were returning from Iraq, Afghanistan and the impact which the wars within each location had on them.

To get an idea of what the soldiers would've gone through we looked at a charity called 'Help for Heroes' which contained various information about the after effects of war for the soldiers whether it be that of physical injuries or mental change upon them. This research for Conor, who wanted to play the character, helped him a lot when it came to characterisation along with learning how much of a life change the war could be for various soldiers and their families. The next part of research we done was based around prostitution and the situations which derive from the profession.

To gain an understanding of prostitution we looked at the different types there were in the country. We found the most common forms of prostitution within the United Kingdom were street prostitutes (related to the working classes) and escorts (related to the middle- upper classes). The form we focused on for the character was the street prostitution which, although this

form is illegal within the United Kingdom, it is the form which the majority of STI and STD cases within the profession seem to circulate within.

We found out from our research that HIV/AIDS can be said to be found within the street prostitution community within various women due to a few women within this profession not using protection whilst having sex with their clients. We decided to apply our findings to the character to see how the storyline for this particular character would go and how we could work with the situation. Before we placed the play together we thought about the different genres we could use either through out the play or whether a single genre for each scene would work.

After testing out and placing the scenes together, we found that having a different genre for each scene worked. We had one scene based around a comedic situation, then the other three drama based and I think due to the fact they could be said to be detached from one another made this run work more effectively at the time. However, although the scenes fitted into together well, we found that the play was not easy to work with especially when it came to the winter when various people ended up contracting various illnesses.

Due to the slow pacing and lack of progress due to everyone not really being happy with the production, we decided to change the production entirely to a format we were all happy with. We went back to our notes and looked at the various ideas which we had made at the time and decided to go back to the London Underground situation and then incorporated this with the idea of the 7/7 London bombings.

To begin our production, Ellen and I looked into various news articles about the London Bombings and the enquiries of the London Bombings that are currently happening within the news. We found accounts of various people's survivor stories mainly from the bombing at King's Cross underground. The majority of accounts we found tended to be from those who were not in the carriage. However I found a piece by journalist Peter Zimonjic who was in the London bombings.

In this article he wrote about what he saw, felt and heard in every detail and using this article we tried to see what we could explore using his descriptions. One particular part of his article that stood out to us was that of a man he encountered who was lying on the floor that seemed to be hurt from the waist down and he turned out to be paralysed from the waist down after the bomb. This person we thought would be a character we could use for someone within the production piece as an effective character.

After discussing the possible outcomes we found that compared to the other proposed storylines we decided that Conor's storyline would have been the most effective out of them all and therefore settled on this character for Conor, which was due to be about a man called Rick White who was an athlete runner going off to meet his girlfriend for an anniversary dinner however he ended up having to do extra training due to being forced by his coach at the last minute.

In having the account at hand to use and also the description of the moments made by the man, Conor was able to apply this to his character and he also done research into a gentleman who was an athlete who

although he was not involved within the London bombing, his muscles seized up on him and therefore leaving him paralysed and unable to compete in any other sports from that moment onwards. This helped him in connecting the emotional aspect of being unable to provide a family and also his career being ruined, this he was able to apply to his monologue and was able to effectively connect to the audience.

Another character we found through the articles was a female person who later became known as the 7/7 blogger on a website called blogspot. Her description of the bomb and the impact which it had upon her relationship with her fiancé afterwards was a moment in which we also incorporated. There is a key moment in which she describes her desperation to be back with him and also the last moments she had with him. We explored this and the possible ways in which we could use this part of her article.

We applied this situation to my character. Personally I found that this was extremely helpful in building my character as I was able to connect emotionally and effectively show this portrayal in my performance. The performance space which we were provided with to begin with was small and cramped which made it hard to get an idea of how to position everyone within the production and the distances between each person when piecing a scene together.

We also had to share this space with two other groups which arose more difficulties with getting the timing of various scenes and transitions timed with one another. This also made it difficult for us to vocally develop as we were in a small space in which we did not need to project our voice however when

we came to being in the drama studio again, we could see the impact upon which being in a small environment compared to the large drama studio had upon our performances.

When we began our production our pacing and attendance levels were really high especially when compared to the other groups however when it came to December time, various people within our group started contracting illnesses which were spreading throughout the college and Sinead in our group who has sickle cell disease ended up having more attacks than she due to the winter weather triggering the attacks.

Whilst we had various people off ill during the time of October-December we found it was difficult trying to run different scenes with the absence of different people as they had a key part within the scene whether it was for transition reasons or being an object within a scene.

For example in a scene we called 'The Melissa Harvey' scene the absence of either Sinead or Ellen acting as a phone within the scene affected the non-naturalism within the scene greatly as whilst one person was saying 'Ms Harvey calling' the other person was saying 'calling reception', just encase we had absences on the day of the performance we decided to change our play and format to a way where we could still run it with the absence of people. Although we had just over a month, we worked quickly and used extra time after college hours to get the scenes placed together and the transitions to run smoothly.

Overall with changing the storyline and the format of our production we were more comfortable with our London bombing storyline. For our production we <https://assignbuster.com/developmental-process-in-city-life/>

kept to a simple layout of five chairs on stage and a wheelchair in order to give more focus on the performances and we also found it an easier layout to handle with just the four of us within the group. We also decided upon each person wearing black top along with either jeans or leggings of a dark colour which also added to a simplistic theme on stage.

The influence behind our staging could be said to have derived from our exploration of Steven Berkoff's *Metamorphosis* in which we used very limited staging props and also tried to focus on our facial and body expressions, such as the moment we were doing scene 10 especially in the tube scene when we were doing the 'something's not right' segment in which we also incorporated influences from Frantic Assembly who are a theatre company that combine the essence of movement, design, music and text together within a production.

This segment of the scene had a musical essence in which we made our text, 'something's not right', sound as if it were the train tracks of the tube. We all agreed that we wanted to aim our play at an audience who knew about the 7/7 bombings when it happened and also those who were affected by it.

So this caused our audience to an age group of 14 years old and over, as from our research of those who were affected at the times of the bombing whether they were involved within it or who's parents would've been caught in the bombing attacks appeared to be around the age of 10-12 years old and are able to emotionally attach to the situation whereas those who were younger don't seem to have a clear memory of the bombing. For our

production we knew we wanted to use a soundtrack, lighting and forms of special effects which could relate back to our production.

In order to get an idea of what forms of sounds we wanted to incorporate together we all looked at various films and productions we were able to look at through the use of youtube. One film in particular we found helped with giving us an idea of the types of sounds we could use was the 9/11 film. We listened to the forms of sounds which they bound together especially at the moment of impact between the buildings and the planes.

Conor and I decided to work on the sounds together as well as the music tracks whilst Ellen and Sinead worked on the lighting effects and also the cues for either the lighting or the sounds along with working out the seconds between each scene and special effect. Conor and I used a library of sounds which Conor had already from his media studies work, we settled upon placing a bombing noise, shattering glass and also a screeching of train tracks together and we felt that this along with our performances helped to create the tube atmosphere at the time of the crash.

We gave both Sinead and Ellen the sounds to listen to so we could get their feedback upon the combinations. We also found a song called 'London Bombs' by Eskimo Joe which we felt went the emotion of our production. For the lighting it was decided to keep it simple and high key for the majority of the performances until certain moments mainly so the audience could still see the performances along with past practicals when we've witnessed how difficult it is for the performers to effectively perform within darker lighting.