

Journeys Home

A Frantic Assembly Style Drama Exercise

The Company worked to create a representation of Christopher's journey home from school. It's a motif that recurs throughout the play and which gives the audience a sense of how Christopher interprets the world and how he is feeling at a given moment in time.

Ask everyone in the group to imagine their own journey home from school and, working individually, to enact a condensed version of it. They should make sure to have a definite start and end point to their journeys.

Once everyone has done this, ask participants to get into groups of four or five and to decide on one person's journey that they are going to enact together.

Explain that for Christopher's journey in the play, inanimate objects become more significant than people. Christopher's condition means that people are quite confusing to him, whereas inanimate objects are constant and dependable.

When creating the journey, there should be no talking and the groups should focus on trying to create the objects that they encounter along the way.

Watch as many of these as you can and ask the audience to reflect on what worked well.

In rehearsal, the Company didn't just devise the journey home from scratch, they already had Simon Stephens' script to help structure their performance.

Hand out the speech from the play that narrates Christopher's journey home and ask someone to read it out loud.

In the same small groups as before, students must create Christopher's journey home, again focusing on the objects mentioned in the speech and making sure that the whole speech is spoken as part of the performance. If there's anything useful from the first round of improvisations, ask the groups to incorporate that.

Watch the different versions. Ask the audience what worked well and then give the group some direction to incorporate into their performance before they show it again.

Pick up on ways to strengthen anything that the audience has identified as successful and otherwise focus on:

How they can have a clear sense of 'journey' – always moving forward, going from one end of the stage to the other, etc.

Incorporating all the objects that are mentioned – have they ignored any? Why? Can we stretch ourselves to attempt the things we don't quite know how to do?

Speed and logic of actors' transitions from being one object to another – is it interesting to see the same actor playing the front door, then fridge door, then bedroom door? Do the objects come to Christopher or the other way round? What happens if you ask the group to switch without having time to plan it?

The possibility of lending the objects personality – think about how you can show the way that Christopher experiences drinking the milkshake for example, not just miming the object itself.

