

How did group skills contribute to the development of the drama?

Our cast for 'After Abigail' consisted of nine people, which immediately had advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, although each member of the group had a lot of individual ideas, it was occasionally difficult to work on each and every one of them, due to us having to deal with such a large group, thus a large number of ideas.

Although this at times resulted in a conflict of ideas, we attempted to utilise this to our advantage, making sure to avoid that people weren't underused of their individual skills. We achieved this successfully as each person was used to their full advantage, as each individual brought a new skill to the group, and an accumulation of these skills resulted in a very effective development of the drama.

Working in such a large group, it was sometimes difficult to use each and every lesson fully; therefore in order to ensure our time was used best, we split into different groups. Once we had decided on the plot, we realized that each scene apart from one consisted usually of only two or three people maximum. Thus, we were able to split up into these smaller groups, for example I usually worked with my teacher Mr. Daniel Craig or my mother, Susan as generally my scenes revolved around those two characters. As we were able to do this, we refrained from wasting time, and it allowed us to develop the drama more effectively and efficiently. This was our greatest group skill of all as we were able to divide the scenes successfully and work on them in smaller individual groups with perhaps one other member of the cast watching to help direct the action. Then at the end of the week, we performed each scene we had worked on during the week to the rest of the group, and received either positive feedback or constructive criticism that we each took on board. This specific group skill we introduced during the development process of 'After Abigail' worked very successfully and led to a productive and profitable development of the drama. In this sense we were very fortunate that we were able to integrate nine strong characters together and still divide our time, ensuring a strong rehearsal process.

In fact during our tour around Drama colleges in London, a teacher from the 'Bedales School' actually complimented our many skills as a group with one in particular - our ability to take onboard critical advice and use it in a positive manner. We each made the drama process very impersonal, which gave us the ability to criticise one and other effectively intending to achieve a more effective overall performance. We were able to deal with each other very directly and our rehearsal became a very 'open' environment in which anything could be said, and it actually resulted with the group becoming stronger and more supportive of one and other. This skill of being able to use advice productively aided heavily to the development of our drama piece 'After Abigail'.

During the response phase, collecting research material became important to in particular ensure our piece was rooted securely in the 1970s. Therefore, as we had such a large

group, we knew that we could use this to our advantage. Consequently another one of our significant group skill became our ability to collect relevant, useful research that aided in the development of ideas and ultimately additional scenes. Our ability to gather this material ensured the effective movement into the development phase of the rehearsal process.

Another group skill that definitely contributed to the development of 'After Abigail' was our collective vocal skills. Many of the members of our group were skilful musicians and this aided dramatically in our attempt at re-creating music. Our choice to take no stereo system and use no sound effects was not only a result of the touring nature of our piece. It also came down to our ability to re-create sound just as effectively. Having singers and musicians within our group made this possible and aided effectively in the production phase of 'After Abigail' in particular. This collective usage of our voice skills was utilised in scene transitions and more significantly to simply root our piece securely into the 1970s. For example we used a few T-Rex songs during scenes for this purpose. Therefore, one of the most effective skills we possessed as a group was the use of our voices to re-create music and sounds. It effectively complimented the time period of 'After Abigail' and contributed heavily to the drama process.