



CROWDED ROOM



Recorded Delivery
Verbatim Theatre

Drama Lesson
Crowded Room Theatre

**CROWDED
ROOM**

Today's objective:

Students will:

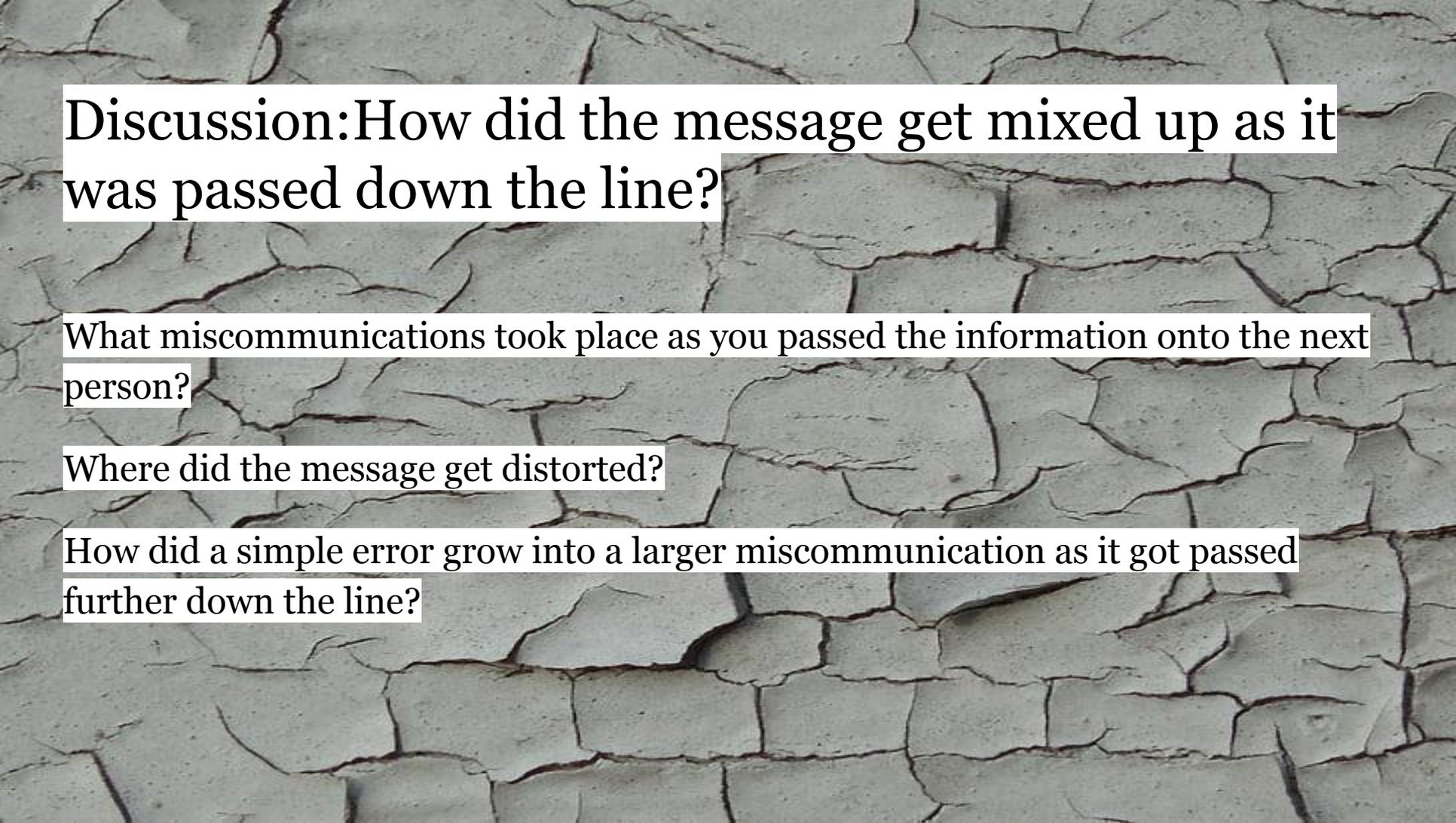
- Consider the implications of using personal narratives to create theatre
- Experiment with the skills required to work with recorded delivery
- Develop a recorded clip for their own piece of Verbatim theatre

AO's

- AO1 - Generate original ideas
- AO2- Demonstrate the skills and processes required to make theatre
- AO3 - Display knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed
- AO4 - Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others

Warm up:

1. Form teams of even numbers and line up labelling your team in number order.
2. Person 1 will act out their action card by miming to person 2. They cannot use any sounds, or mime words, they must mime the action. Only person 1 should see the action card.
3. When person 2 thinks they know what the action is, they will turn around and mime the action to person 3. They must not check whether they are correct before moving down the line.
4. Repeat this process until the final person in your line thinks they know what the action is, when they announce it to the teacher. If they are correct, their team gets the point.



Discussion: How did the message get mixed up as it was passed down the line?

What miscommunications took place as you passed the information onto the next person?

Where did the message get distorted?

How did a simple error grow into a larger miscommunication as it got passed further down the line?

What is 'Recorded Delivery' and how does it fit into the Verbatim Theatre style?

As you are no doubt already aware, Verbatim Theatre involves creating performances which centre around real events or stories of real people, and which utilise artefacts of these people (either their voices or their words) to communicate the narrative to the audience.

RECORDED DELIVERY is a style of Verbatim Theatre which utilises recordings of people speaking, which the actors have in their ear as they perform and say exactly what they hear. It offers an opportunity for extreme authenticity on stage.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: What does the warm up activity have in common with working in recorded delivery and verbatim theatre styles?

WATCH this video:

Use the ideas presented in this video to inform your discussions in the next task



Acting with ethics

In small groups, discuss the following ethical questions:

- As an actor, what are you responsible for when using recorded delivery to re-tell someone's story in their own words?
- How can you ensure that you are doing their 'voice' or words justice?
- Where is the line between performance and imitation?

Crowded Room Theatre Company

Crowded Room is a theatre company who often work with Recorded Delivery in their shows.

“Many of our projects are verbatim, in that they use the precise words that real people have spoken. The Listening Room is completely verbatim, as is The Colours. Some of our work departs from this a little - ...but there’s usually a verbatim element in our work. I find that real people are much funnier, braver, sweeter, more shocking and more contradictory than fictional characters, and using verbatim material is the most vivid way to get real people across to an audience.”

-Harriet Madeley
Co-Artistic Director



Crowded Room

Here is a clip from *The Listening Room*

You'll notice the Recorded Delivery element is central to the story, to the extent that the actors are only assigned their characters as the play begins.

WATCH this clip with your group and complete the reflection task.



Lets Try:

Select a 1-2 min section from one of the following speeches, or choose your own and using headphones, deliver it to a partner.

Try to emulate the idiosyncrasies of the speaker's tone, pitch, pace, pauses, volume changes and vocal gestures such as hesitations or coughs, sniffs. Forget how you sound to your partner and just immerse yourself in the retelling of the story.

When you've both had a go, feedback to one another.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNJZhuZCYow>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3frkqULroo8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Grt9mqdlIOY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65ci6rZYVes>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCNuPcf8Loo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSfmH-itYGo>

Making your own Recorded Delivery piece

From an interview with Mark Knightly and Harriet Madeley, Co-Artistic Directors of Crowded Room

What advice would you give to students wanting to emulate your style?

Harriet:

Look for stories or themes you feel really passionate about - whether this is because you feel they don't get talked about enough, or because of a personal relationship to the subject matter, the important thing is that it's a story you're burning to tell... otherwise, someone else (who is burning to tell that story) could probably do it better. Once you've found the story, speak to lots of people, so you have plenty of material to choose from... and I often find myself using interviews with the people who surprise me somehow. We find it's important to cultivate a positive relationship with everyone we speak to, and make sure they know what will be done with their words. It's quite a responsibility telling real stories.

Mark:

If you have an idea then a good way to start is talking to people about it. Start building connections and testing the idea out. Find the people who are part of the story and see how you can work together. If possible (and after checking it's OK with them) it can be useful to audio record your interactions. You never know what might end up being part of the play or film.

I'd always think about how the process can serve the people that the story is about, especially with co-created or verbatim work, you want to align your aims and objectives with the people, or groups that you're working with.

Start with the first step:

In your group, set your aims and intentions from the beginning of the process by asking:

Whose story are we interested in telling?

Why are we the right people to tell it?

How will we access the voices of the people involved? (Keep in mind you don't need to necessarily record new interview material, there is an amazing catalogue of recorded material available online and maybe you just need to collate it together for your narrative to be told?)

What do we want the audience to feel when they're watching our piece?

Some ideas to get you started:

- The voices of celebrities being asked sexist questions in interviews
- The history of your local area
- Interviews with people from the news following moments of intense fear
- Material available from reality TV show recordings
- Politicians dodging questions
- Interviews with members of Extinction Rebellion
- Material from documentaries exploring the harm caused by 'fast fashion'
- The reactions to a sporting event such as the roll out of the the European Super League

The Process

1. Choose your story
2. Consider the available perspectives on this story: how many points of view could you include?
3. Develop interview materials, giving opportunities for your subject to speak freely as often as you can, as this is the most useful material for recorded delivery
4. Collect recordings of these people speaking, either via online sources or by creating your own interviews
5. Consider your available material and how you will structure the recording to take the audience on a journey through the show - check back in with your original aims and intentions
6. Edit the recordings into the audio track of the show. To do this you can use software such as GarageBand or Audacity.