

Introduction:

Hey, I'm Emily, and I'm a drama student at De Montfort University.

I'm interested in the ways in which drama can be used to empower and help people. I'm delivering a workshop on communication, where we will be drawing on a range of techniques and methods to explore how we communicate, understanding how we can improve our own communication, as well as build awareness of how others may communicate.

The key skills we will be exploring in relation to the four C's, are obviously communication, but also collaboration and creativity, as well as some elements of critical thinking. This workshop is made up of three main activities, which are developed to be completed as a large group, but I have provided alternatives for if you're working on your own. These activities involve games, as well as elements of drama and performance, to look at a variety of different communication types in order to understand communication barriers, and how to overcome them.

So, let's get started.

Activity One:

Before we start the first main activity, I have a starter task for you to do. So we're going to begin with creating a table of communication forms, dividing this into verbal and non-verbal communication. Now, for anyone who's unsure what these mean, verbal communication is about language, both written and spoken, non-verbal communication is their transmission of messages and signals through non-verbal platforms. Now, try to add as many communication forms as you can to this table. Pause the video while you do this task.

Great, now hopefully you have lots of communication forms written down. I'm going to list a few examples to help. Some examples of verbal communication include speaking, listening, reading, writing, and sign language. And so examples of non-verbal communication include facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, posture, body language, proximity, and touch. Great now, if you have more than that, that is wonderful because our aim is to start to acknowledge and understand as many communication forms as we can. Now have a little think to yourself about which communication form we use more, verbal or nonverbal? Research has shown that the majority of people in elements of personal conversation, use 55% non-verbal communication, 38% voice and tone, and only 7% of actual spoken words.

Now we're going to get started on the first main task. This is what I like to call the emotions game. For this game, all the groups sit in a circle and one person leaves the room. Now the whole group picks an emotion. And this person that's left the room will come back in and

ask anyone from the group to do an action. Now say to the group has picked the emotion, sadness, then this person might ask someone to act out, sweeping the floor. Now this person would have to pretend to sweep the floor while sad. They may do this by slouching over, pretending to cry and mime sweeping the floor of their hands.

If you're doing this on your own, you might like to explore how we act differently when we have different emotions, so you won't pretend to sweep the floor happy. In which case you would be smiling and sweeping as you go. Now give this a go.

Activity Two:

Our second main activity involves looking at different communication barriers. Now for this activity, I've split it into two different tasks. If you're doing this as a big group, you may wish to split into two different groups and complete their tasks separately, and then switch over. If you're a smaller group, you may wish to start with one task and then move on to the other.

The first task is to charades, which focus on the barriers of not being able to speak or not being able to hear. Now charades is where you'll be given something such as an animal or a moving, or anything that you'll have to act out to the group for them to guess, without speaking. Now, this may be a kangaroo. And that means you might have to hop about like a kangaroo until the group guesses what this action is. For this, you may wish to create your own charades set or use an online set.

The second activity is blindfolding where you take away person sight. Now, this strongly focuses on the use of clear instructions, where you'll be guiding someone with a blindfold through an obstacle course. You can choose how hard it is obstacle course, but it's very important for the other members of the group to be very clear on what they want this person to do to get from point A to point B.

Now, give both of these tasks a go and if you're working on your own, I'd like you to list as many communication barriers as you can think of and think about how cutting off one sense can make yourself more open for the others. Potentially put on some music sit down, close your eyes and think about how your hearing is heightened and your other senses maybe heightened to.

Activity Three:

So it is now time for activity three Forum Theatre, which is a form of theatre developed by Augusto Boal, a theatre practitioner who developed Theatre of the Oppressed. This is equally performance, activism practice, and an educational forum. It stimulates critical observations and representations of reality. Forum Theatre encourages audience interaction, and allows you to explore different options during a certain situation. First, you'll develop something with multiple problems. The problem we're looking at is

communication barriers. Now, you may look at loss of sight and how this makes it hard to see. So when you obviously have to talk clearly, and we've explored this through the theatre. So first, the performance would have to have lots of communication problems. And then the second time you'll be performing it again, where you'll have to try and correct those problems with help from the audience. The audience can stop the performance and suggest how you can improve this, or they can step in themselves.

This helps you explore how different options can change your situation. This performance wants to try and be short to try and make it two to three minutes long. Consider all of the communication barriers we looked at in the last few tasks.

If you are going to be doing this solo, create a performance with any barriers to the audience, and then re-perform yourself a version of the same story taking away these barriers and making it very accessible.

Portfolio Advice:

Okay, so to conclude, we have now looked at elements of the four C's, specifically communication, creativity and collaboration. Now it'll be useful for you to document this in a portfolio, we've provided a range of portfolio examples. Ones you may wish to use include a collage, which will help you show elements of non-verbal communication, or you may wish to use a theatre review to help show the more theatrical side of the workshop. All of us could be useful to document your own experience and everything you've learnt. I hope you enjoyed the workshop.