Writing/drama activity

Taking a walk in someone else’s shoes

If you have read the play *Verbatim* you will know it’s made up of a series of monologues that were devised after the writers interviewed 30 people, each with a different perspective on violent crime.

As if they were making a documentary, the writers used throughout the play the real words of real people. But unlike documentary makers they mixed up people’s words and the contexts in which they were spoken, thus creating composite characters. This means none of the characters in the play are based on any of the people who were interviewed and that none actually exist in real life.

You might devise your own performance based on interviews with real people (those with different views of a single event or series of events). Or you might take an event as a starting point from which to invent characters and their points of view.

If you want to look at current issues then either start by choosing a newspaper or magazine article, or base your play on a favourite or well-known story or even a myth or legend.

Whatever starting point you choose, the story’s event (or events) should have life-changing effects on its characters.

Decide the main characters involved in or affected by the event. Choose the one who most appeals to you and write a monologue for them that offers their point of view on what has happened.

You might create a timeline of the event and make group decisions on where each character was during the event, how they found out about it, and what effect it had on them.

Explore how you'll present these monologues. Try breaking them up and weaving them around each other. Rehearse them, editing and refining your monologues as you go.

Work with one member of your group as director, or give and take feedback from the whole group.