

Rehearsal Strategies

Directors and actors try out various strategies in their rehearsals in order to explore character and relationships. Sometimes a scene may seem dry or affected, and it's difficult to know what the problem may be - exploration through these techniques can sometimes lead to an "ah hah" moment of realization. Sometimes just trying something - silly though it may seem - can help unblock creativity.

Read through the rehearsal strategies and select at least two to apply to your rehearsal. If possible, document the rehearsal with video so that it may be watched objectively. If video is not available, then work in small groups so that actors might help one another. Most of these strategies require more than one person. Monologues must be addressed towards someone else.

Touch

As you say each line you must find a way to touch the other person, in a way appropriate to the line. Helps you find ways to make the lines mean something to the person you are speaking to.

Slap

Stand facing a partner with your hands out, under the partners outstretched hands. As you say your lines, try to slap your partners hands on any important lines or lines which change emotion. The partner is to try and avoid the slap. Helps put energy onto each line.

Tug-o-War

Stand facing a partner with a rope held between you. Your objective is to win the tug-o-war while saying your lines. The partner also wants to win. Helps you overcome an obstacle, while focusing on your objective.

Brackets

As you speak each line you must pause at the end and say what is actually being done as if in brackets (you know, what is not actually said, but is understood). Can really help you understand the subtext (and find pauses).

Opposites

If it is a sad scene, then play it as a stand up comedian trying to get laughs. Find the opposite of the scene to play - or an opposite in your character to play. Can help open up character exploration that has gone stale and seems cliched.

Verb It

On each beat (or change in tone) call out the verb that applies. Refer to the Actable Verbs handout for a huge list of possibilities. Helps to understand objectives in a script.

Melodrama

Play the scene as a melodrama - way over the top in expression and movement. The bigger the better. Helps to unblock self conscious movements.

Absolutely Still

Play the scene without moving at all. Just look at the audience - don't use your hands or move your feet. Don't even move your weight from one hip to the other. Helps you to become aware fidgety behavior.

Animals

Imagine your character is an animal - what would it be? Keep those animal characteristics foremost in your mind as you play the scene. What does it do to your voice, movement, contact with other people? Helps you visualize other aspects to the character.

Mime

Play the entire scene without words. Make it very clear what the feeling is - what is the objective? Don't try to use charades for words. Express what it is saying with your body. Very interesting to watch, the actor must be very clear in their objectives.