

Looking back on Touring Theater, touring has shown that there is a lot that goes into researching, creating, and developing a piece of theater for children and that the impact can not only do wonders for the audience watching but also for the people involved too. First, during the research of our theme of collective consciousness, I created a massive mind map that stemmed from the subject—helping me grasp the concept a lot easier. Our director Hannah McPake then set us off to do tasks that involved ideas that were connected to our theme. The first task that had a significant impact on the piece was Lucy, Macx, and I's performance of scientists explaining the origin story of dolphins. This sprouted the idea of working with scientists in our production, which soon became the 'boffins.' In another task, James and I created a performance, based on Greta Thunberg, which started by welcoming everyone onto a ship headed towards 'New Gaza.' Welcoming aboard the audience became a critical idea that we, as a collective, wanted to use to welcome our viewers onto the Pendulum—immersing the audience into the story. James and I also created print outs of maps and tickets to the ship, which also blossomed the idea of giving schools letters to come aboard the Pendulum. Another contribution of mine was the idea of the lighthouse at the end of the universe. This came from my mini storytelling performance using ASL. Putting all of these ideas and concepts together to create Bon Voyage Boffins helped impact the audience strongly. A viewpoint I highlighted in Task 2 was the ability to give the audience a space to discuss issues and themes. At the end of our shows, we provide the audience with a chance to do that, especially if some children suffer from learning disabilities. For example, in Swiss Valley Primary in Llanelli, some of the kids who asked questions never speak up because they have autism—this was brought to light when the headmaster of the primary told James. Giving children accessibility to grasp and understand themes brought to them through theater—like the power of belief—is very important, and this experience of touring theater highlights that. There have been some difficulties faced during this time. Being too on the nose with some lines was something I struggled with. For example, making the ghost nets saying lines too literally while also having a hard time figuring out precisely what my base character was an expert in. An important issue that was addressed was the changing of my line, "I may be nuts, but at least I have my marbles," to, "People may call me nuts, but at least I have my marbles." The change was made because there can be a very negative response in terms of addressing mental health. However, after this entire experience, I've learned a lot. Firstly, Touring Theater has taught me to grow and adapt to many different spaces to perform in and change my volume levels to fit the space. Secondly, Touring Theater has taught me how to execute "get in and get outs" and the real physical requirement they have and the need to stay healthy. Finally, as Hannah McPake taught us early on, always keep the playfulness alive.