PROGRAMME

HANDBOOK

By

Andrew Monaghan and Jane Lee
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See Appendices for detailed breakdown of games and exercises
# TCFM APPENDICES

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Section 1 Introduction
Chapters 1 - 3 cover the aims, philosophy and overview of the course. It is important in this section to become familiar with the course principles.

Section 2 Course Outline
Chapter 4 gives a daily breakdown of the course schedule, with the aims for each day. The exercises from this schedule can be accessed in Section 4, the Appendices. The specific category for each exercise is listed in the right hand column of the schedule.

Section 3 - Findings Chapters 5 - 7 discuss findings from the pilot workshop, recommendations for future courses and an overall conclusion about the course.

Section 4 - The Appendices
Appendices 1 - 8 include a detailed breakdown of each of the exercises listed in the course schedule. Each exercise is listed in alphabetical order under its appropriate category.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this training programme would not have been possible without the support of the following people and organisations:

First Cut! Youth Film Project

Over the past six years First Cut! Youth Film Project has developed a successful model for engaging young people in all aspects of filmmaking. The work of the Project consists of a rolling programme of workshops, summer schools and film screening events for young people. Participants build skills in all areas of filmmaking including screenwriting, pre-production & roles, production, acting for film, direction, camera, lighting, and location sound, and editing principles - all of which are put into practice during the shooting of films. This process builds confidence and skills, enhances personal development and promotes the social inclusion of young people in the wider community. In addition the involvement of young people in this film making process encourages group work skills, collaboration, and leadership. It has also opened up avenues and opportunities in filmmaking for some young people’s future studies and careers.

To date over 1,000 young people from the Cork Harbour area have participated. First Cut! has engaged with, and developed strong links with filmmakers, youth organisations, projects clubs, schools, Youthreach, YMCA and COPE.

Since its inception, the First Cut! Youth Film Project has been funded and supported by the Arts Office of Cork County Council, South and East Cork Area Development (SECAD) and Cork Film Centre.

Mary Mc Grath

Mary Mc Grath BA (UCL), H Dip. Educ. (UCC), Coordinator of First Cut! Youth Film Project since 2006 provided guidance and encouragement. She has considerable experience as a community development practitioner, researcher and facilitator. Mary has trained with Meitheal, CAN, Aontas and NALA and has been directly involved in this Project with young people and with a whole range of
youth organisations who work with them.

**Cork Film Centre:**
Cork Film Centre is a not-for-profit, membership based organisation which provides support and access to resources for filmmakers, video artists, animators, and those engaged in multi-disciplinary work involving the moving image.

**Cork County Council Arts Office:**
Cork County Council Arts Office provides financial support and actively help us to disseminate the learning from this work in order to foster and encourage excellence in youth arts provision in film in County Cork and nationally.

**HSE Cork Arts and Health Programme:**
HSE Cork Arts and Health Programme provides financial support in recognition of this projects’ positive impact on young peoples’ confidence, life skills and abilities to deal with anxiety, value judgements and perceptions. CAHP is interested in how film as an art form and production process can support the mental health and overall wellbeing of young people. The programme is keenly interested in the development of a model for working with young people that involves the use of drama, games, improvisation and a LearningMethods approach.

**Cobh Youth Services:**
First Cut! has worked in partnership with Cobh Youth Services over the last number of years in very successful film making workshops. In TCFM we continue to complement the work of the organisation and its youth workers, with whom we share common values such as, the empowerment of young people; equality and inclusion; helping to develop long term life skills and development of young people’s confidence.

**Nicola Lucey:**
Nicola Lucey (Community Health Worker for Youghal) who gave us valuable advice while establishing the course.

We would especially like to thank all of the participants who took part in the pilot workshop. Their enthusiasm, dedication and feedback was most welcome and appreciated.
Foreword

By Aidan Warner and Julie Murphy

Cork Arts + Health Programme (CAHP), HSE South, is delighted to be associated with First Cut! Youth Film Project and in particular with this Towards Confident Film Making Workbook.

The overall aim of CAHP is to facilitate quality artistic interventions within healthcare settings and domains. In all of its work and in particular in the production of this workbook First Cut! is creating opportunities for young people to gain in confidence, self esteem and positive experiences through becoming involved in high quality film production training. Film Making is a team process and involves many people working together, taking on a wide variety of roles in order for a film to be brought to fruition. The processes detailed in this Workbook provide a set of life-skills that can benefit not only young people but people of any age group. These processes involve developing self confidence, building productive and cooperative relationships, having fun, cultivating focus and commitment and valuing one’s own contribution and the contribution of everyone in the team.

Given that much emotional and mental pain that many people experience is linked to lack of self belief, isolation, feelings of uselessness, lack of purpose and lack of laughter the skills and opportunities presented in this workbook are a very rich resource of health enhancing tools for groups to work with.

One of the hallmarks of First Cut! Youth Film Project is its commitment to quality process in the way that it engages with young people. This reflects the very deep culture of respect embedded within the project and the parity of esteem that pertains between young people and facilitators involved in the project. Respect, equality, empowerment, quality standards, sharing of responsibility, skills and opportunities and nurturing creativity are the elements that make up the ethos of First Cut! Youth Film Project. This ethos prevails in both the ways of working of the project and the aspirations that it sets for itself in terms of both process and outcome and underpins all of the detailed guidelines set out in this training manual.

This Workbook is a valuable resource for young people’s organisations and it is a tribute to the people involved First Cut! Youth Film Project that they have had the dedication and generosity to produce this resource and to make it freely available online to any group wishing to access it.
spirit reflects the very strong commitment of First Cut! to supporting and promoting the health and creativity of young people and to disseminating the tried and tested resources of the organisation as broadly as possible.

CAHP wish to congratulate First Cut! Youth Film Project on the production of this useful and valuable resource and wish First Cut! continued success in all of its work.

Aidan Warner and Julie Murphy
Cork Arts+Health Programme (CAHP)
HSE South
February 2014
This programme was devised by Jane Lee and Andrew Monaghan in conjunction with Mary McGrath of First Cut! This workbook was written by Andrew and Jane following, and in response to, the pilot workshop of Towards Confident Film Making held in July, 2013 in Cobh Youth Services.

**Andrew Monaghan**
Andrew Monaghan is a qualified Alexander Technique Teacher and apprentice Learning Methods trainer who works with actors to not only improve their physical technique but also to overcome any blocks or anxieties they may have about performing. He has experience in acting for theatre and for film and he regularly facilitates drama sessions for the Playing Mantis Improvisation Group.

**Jane Lee**
Jane Lee is an award-winning writer/director whose short films have screened at international festivals including Seattle, Hamburg, Chicago and Telluride. Over the last 7 years Jane has done extensive film-making workshops both in live action and animation with organizations such as First Cut, Cork Film Centre, St. John’s Central College, DLIADT and UCC.

“We can use our skills to develop confidence in young film-makers in developing their own themes, telling their own stories, directing their own films and in performing to camera”. - Jane Lee.
CONFIDENT FILM-MAKING OCCURS WHEN......

- each member in a team feels confident in their roles - they know what they have to do and how to achieve it.

- each member of the team feels at ease with themselves and with others, so they can be present and focused on the work at hand.

- actors can perform to the best of their ability comfortably and without fear, developing natural performances.

- directors feel comfortable directing actors.

- a writer feels they can tell a story that they believe in.

- a director can tell a story according to their own personal vision.

- each member of the team accepts and supports the others and all work together to serve the overall vision.

- each member of the team can communicate clearly with the other.

- film-makers feel free to experiment, be creative and have fun rather than blindly trying to adhere to given formulae.

ON THE TOWARDS CONFIDENT FILM-MAKING COURSE...

‘Towards Confident Film Making’ is a 40 hour programme for young people who have basic skills and some experience in film-making and are between the ages of 13 - 19 years old. Participants learn to write stories, act and direct for camera through processes involving drama games, film exercises and Learning Methods. The process is not a means to an end - it is not about ‘the film’ we produce at the end of the two weeks but about learning how to develop confidence at all levels of film-making, both on a personal and professional level.
INTRODUCTION

by Mary McGrath

“ How to tell a story in the most dramatic and engaging way possible, while keeping your own voice.”

This programme sets out to give opportunities to young film-makers to become more confident in creating and crafting their own stories. It aims to develop a practical model for working with young people who are interested in film-making where story telling is focussed in a way that develops their confidence in themselves, their experiences and their own ability.

This learning can apply to young people in a holistic way, enabling them to deal with anxiety, and issues like bullying which affect their lives in a negative way. These are skills which enhance their lives in many ways, including developing their own self-esteem and confidence and in helping them to realise their goals in filmmaking in a setting which is enjoyable.

Having a healthy self-esteem and confidence level is hugely important for us all to live happy and successful lives. With more young people suffering from low self-esteem and lack of confidence it is important that as professionals we support young people to reach their full potential. We hope that this work book that will help you develop ways in which to help young people to build a healthy self-esteem, increase in confidence and growth as a person.

Who is this workbook for?
This workbook is offered to artists, youth workers, teachers and everyone interested in working with young people through the arts and in particular through film making. We hope that it will be of practical use to:

• Arts and health practitioners.
• Those proving facilitation, organisational and project development support to groups/organisations developing arts and health initiatives.
• Psychologists, therapists and counsellors.
• Transition Year Coordinators and anyone developing film making programmes within secondary schools.
• Community workers working with young people through the medium of arts.
Those initiating and delivering youth arts projects in a community setting.
Those involved in Youth Arts Organisations, Arts Centres, Community Youth projects and clubs.
Those developing youth leadership programmes.
Youth organisation coordinators.
Anyone involved in education and training, both formal and informal.
Youth Justice Workers in Garda Youth Diversion Projects.
Social workers, residential social workers, key workers.
Youthreach and YMCA Coordinators, those in non-formal education sector.
Anyone working with young people, partially or entirely through the arts.

The above list of suggested facilitators is not exhaustive. Other professionals involved in long-term interventions with young people may find this programme beneficial. It is important that the facilitator has experience communicating with young people and feels confident that they are able to deliver a programme of this nature.

TCFM has been documented by the artists so that the final programme can be implemented by other organisations and communities as a process for developing artistic expression, creativity, technical ability and confidence in in young people in schools, youth groups and non-formal settings nation-wide.

Overall documentation is through the development of this Practical Workbook, (available in pdf, mobi and rtf format), which is a Programme Guide for creativity, acting, script development and confidence building in youths.

Depending on which organisation wishes to implement the programme, practical training may be required for more technical aspects such as camera-handling, storytelling, animation, etc. as well as training in LearningMethods (or alternative approaches to confidence-building).

Training can be provided through seminars and workshops to other bodies that wish to use the programme.

As this it is an advanced film-making course, it is recommended that at least one of the leaders should have sufficient skills and experience as a film-maker.
OVERALL STRUCTURE

Over the course we explore themes with young film-makers, discussing with them the importance of finding and using their own voice to tell a story. We then develop these themes by way of drama games and improvisation.

These drama games serve a number of functions - to develop stories, to learn how to create believable characters with real wants and motivations, to become more confident in front of camera, to improve dramatic and directorial techniques and to express the themes which we have explored.

We incorporate the LearningMethods approach as a means to help overcome any blocks or anxieties performers might have.

We do short film exercises in conjunction with the drama games in order to strengthen the participants’ skills with the film equipment, to deepen their knowledge of visual storytelling and for feedback and playback purposes.

This feeds into a scripting / storyboarding process so that the participants can make their own short film.

Finally we have a screening and feedback session where everyone can show off their work and give insights into the overall process.
TOWARD CONFIDENT FILM-MAKING’S AIMS

• To bring together enthusiastic young people who are interested in developing their skills and confidence in a variety of aspects of film-making, including: Story, Acting, Character Development and Directing.

• To show young film-makers how they can become more confident in creating and crafting their own stories, and how to develop believable characters when they are acting.

• To develop a model for working with young people interested in film-making, where story telling is focussed on in a way that develops their confidence in themselves, their experiences and their own ability.

• To focus on the process of film-making, not just the end result. Participants will learn how to develop skills for themselves, how to identify and move past their own ‘blocks’ in writing and performance, and how to identify and develop themes for their own story-telling thus developing self-guided learning.

Over the course we explore themes with the young film-makers, discussing with them the importance of finding and using your own voice to tell a story. We then develop these themes by way of drama games and improvisation.

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We incorporate Learning Methods approach to help overcome any blocks or anxieties performers might have. We will do short film exercises in conjunction with the drama games in order to refresh the participant’s skills with the film equipment, to give them knowledge about visual storytelling and for feedback and playback purposes. This will then feed into a scripting / storyboarding process so that the participants can make their own short film(s) either through live action filming or animation. Finally we will have a screening and feedback session where everyone can show off their work and give insights into the overall process.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Leaders ...

- Create a safe space and structure for creativity to flourish.
- Respect and accept participants as intelligent and co-operative individuals.
- Consider the ‘optimal input’ for any learning situation, encouraging self-guided learning to occur.
- Focus on process and quality rather than product.
- Emphasise experiential and experimental learning.
- Provide multiple methodologies and techniques.
- Explain the reasons behind each exercise.
- Scaffold the learning so that learning is incremental.
- Give participants constructive feedback on their work based on experience/expertise and not own value judgement.
- Are vigilant to ensure that everyone is included and no-one feels left out.
- Teach and establish best practice for film-making skills and team work.
- Share their own creativity and expertise.
- Differentiate between ‘Truth’ and ‘Actuality’
- Are Authentic.
1. Create a Safe Space

What do we mean by a Safe Space?

Establishing a safe and expressive environment upfront allows participants to relax and feel included. This helps to align the group’s behaviour and goals.

A clear statement of intention can facilitate the creation of a safe environment. A leader’s opening statement such as “This is going to be a safe space where we can be open and honest”, serves to establish a place in which the participants can express themselves and feel comfortable in their expression provided the leader’s words are subsequently matched by their actions.

When told we have been invited to, “A quiet dinner party with close friends”, we get a sense of what would be appropriate for that event. It affects how we behave even before we arrive at the party.

A safe space is created ...

When Participants:

• Know who they’re here with.
• Respect one another.
• Are familiar with the location.
• Know what will happen.
• Are familiar with the equipment.
• Feel they are being listened to.
• Are acknowledged for tasks undertaken.
When Leaders:

• Know what they are doing.
• Are prepared and knowledgeable.
• Are open and respectful.
• Are authentic and honest.
• Are able to support, reassure and encourage.
• Are able to address problems.
• Have good time management.
• Give honest and constructive feedback.

When the Group:

• Has an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.
• Has a sense of equality.
• Has an attitude of openness and acceptance.
• Has a shared sense of play and fun.

When Learning:

• Comes in bite-size steps that lead to progress.
• Contains many small successes.
• Involves having fun.
2. Respect and accept participants as intelligent and co-operative individuals

Leaders seek input from the participants as often as possible. For instance, when developing house rules, leaders can ask the participants to co-create by asking, “What would you like the house rules to be?”

Leaders are open to accepting all suggestions. Leaders do not rule out ideas and suggestions by ignoring or dismissing them without explanation. When an idea does not align with the leader’s plan, it is important to give clear reasons why.

While maintaining appropriate boundaries, participants are perceived as future peers and equals. Leaders encourage participants to step up and behave as young adults.

Leaders give the participants time and space to talk with - and learn from - each other, encouraging team work at all times.

3. Consider the “optimal input” for any learning situation

Leaders trust in participants interest and natural learning abilities. Over emphasis on the “correct approach” or dogmatic teaching practices can stifle interest and get in the way of learning.

In order to promote self confidence, leaders stand back and allow participants the space to learn and figure things out for themselves, aiming to intervene only when the need arises. The learning is kept as open as possible, doing exercises and games that will lead to insights.

Each day contains sufficient tasks and learning objectives to keep the participants engaged and involved but not so much that the games and exercises feel rushed. Demanding too much, too soon can leave everybody feeling like they have under-achieved. Learning happens more effectively when there is time and space for people to explore and discover.

Leaders aim to step back and allow the participants to take more control as they gain in confidence and skills over the duration of the course. By the end of the course, leaders serve more in the role
of mentors than of teachers, with participants in full control of shooting their own movie. At this stage leaders only step in when they feel it is absolutely needed.

4. Focus on Process and Quality

The focus of the course is on the process and not on the end result. This gives participants the space to develop their skills and experiment with different roles.

By learning the basics well the participants will have the building blocks to go and create something amazing in the future.

5. Scaffold the learning

Scaffold the learning so that it starts in bite size pieces that build on each other leading to increasing successes.

The course starts with games that allow participants to get to know each other and to communicate freely. This is followed with exercises in drama, story building and developing camera techniques. The learning builds incrementally until the participants feel confident that they can do it for themselves.

In the second week of the course the participants apply the processes that they have learned to create a short film from start to finish as a team.
6. Experiential and Experimental Learning

Hands on learning, play and experimentation are essential. Often, it is better for a participant to try things out for themselves and discover what works and what doesn’t. Making mistakes is a valuable learning tool which should be acknowledged. A deeper understanding can be reached through direct experience than when a leader simply points out what you should and shouldn’t do.

Experiential and experimental learning are also vital for participants to discover what works for them. Very often participants will say something like “I don’t like acting/writing…” Until they try it for themselves and then find they actually love it.

It is extremely beneficial for a director to experience an actor’s role and vice versa. By experimenting with each of the various roles in film-making, the participant gains a better appreciation and communication within a film-making team.

7. Provide multiple methodologies and techniques.

No one technique suits everyone. Leaders are transparent about this while offering more than one way to access acting, writing and story-telling skills. This allows individual participants to discover for themselves what works best for them.

Leaders encourage participants to continue to experiment with different methodologies and techniques in order to develop their own unique style and to work in a way that they enjoy.

Through freedom of experimentation an artist can develop unique and individual works.
8. Explain the reason behind each exercise

Participants can get frustrated if they think a particular game is pointless or futile. It is important to explain the objective of each game and how it can be applied to film-making. For instance, throwing the ball and accepting the ball helps to develop the skill in actors to communicate when “throwing a line” to each other. A game like “Yes, and” helps to give an actor and director the skills to collaborate with each other.

9. Give participants constructive feedback on their work based on experience/expertise and not personal value judgements

It’s extremely important that leaders distinguish between:

A. Technical aspects of a work which can be improved upon. E.g. “Having the camera at this angle means you can’t see the actors face. This makes it hard for the viewer to read their emotions”. Versus, B. Personal taste. Value judgements such as “I like this”, “I don’t like that”. E.g. “I don’t like this angle, I think it would look better from higher up.”

Leaders do not share personal value judgements on things they dislike. Leaders may share value judgements when they DO like something, but always emphasising that it’s down to personal tastes or ‘criteria’; “I like this because I personally love stories with a happy ending”. It is also worth emphasising, “but that’s just my personal taste and everyone’s different taste.” The most important thing is that leaders emphasise that an artist should always be guided by what they personally like.

10. Be vigilant to ensure that everyone is included and that no-one feels left out.

Leaders maintain open attention so that they can observe the goings on in the group. They also check in with each other regularly about each of the participants on the course. One leader can lead an exercise while the other observes the group.

Teams should be rotated to create different group dynamics and avoid cliques. Different
methodologies and games, as mentioned above, helps to get all personality types involved. If a participant is having difficulty with a particular game a leader could step in as a partner rather than a fellow peer in order to give this participant more help and support with this task.

11. Teach best practice and camera settings.

It is important to teach best practice when it comes to technical know-how of camera settings and of team roles within film-making.

12. Share own creativity and expertise as well as inspiration.

Leaders inspire as well as guide and teach. When a leader opens up about his/her own creative process participants feel inspired to do the same. Sharing pieces of work that the leader is inspired by (either films or writing) catalyses the participants to do the same. This helps them to access their own creativity in a fun and exciting way.

This sense of sharing also creates a sense of confidence in the participants which underpins the whole ethos of the course.

Sharing with them other productions will expand their definition of what a film or story can be. Showing participants unique short films, as opposed to discussing and intellectualising about what a ‘good film’ is, showing participants unique short films can change their definition of story-telling simply and quickly. They are free to draw their own conclusions about what they liked or disliked.

Film-making is about passion. Allow participants the time and space to discover their own passion within the course.
13. Differentiate between Truth and Actuality

This important concept should be integrated into the teaching throughout the course.

A good story contains “truth”. This does not necessarily mean it is a true story - it means that it is believable, recognisable and that someone watching can identify with it.

Actuality refers to actual events that have happened.

Participants should not be asked to draw on any actual events that cause them emotional stress, either by leaders or their peers. They should be reminded that they are not their character and to use imagination at all times to get to the truth of that character.


Being authentic as an actor means that the actor is imagining the character from within, giving a natural performance rather than emoting or indulging in over characterisation.

An authentic writer or director is telling the story he/ she wants to tell, grounded in their unique passion and stand point.

Authentic leaders share knowledge that they really believe in.

One of the aims of the course is to allow participants to become more authentic, trusting in their own abilities and sharing their creativity without fear. To achieve this leaders are authentic themselves and encourage authenticity as a concept throughout all of the exercises.
A NOTE ON CREATIVITY by Andrew Monaghan

Creativity can be defined in many ways. It’s the ability to think of a number of choices or possible solutions to a given problem, to find solutions that may not be at first obvious. It’s a freedom of thinking that’s open to generate new ideas and perspectives.

There are some common blocks to creativity:

- Believing there is one right answer.
- Trying to come up with a ‘perfect’ or ‘good’ idea.
- Believing that your ideas are limited and precious, that they must be ‘kept’.
- Judgement: “what if nobody likes it?”, “My ideas are no good”.
- Being ‘spoon-fed’ information, passively accepting information and ideas. In particular, assuming ideas from ‘authorities’ such as books and teachers are inherently better.

Unblocking Creativity

Some people say they ‘aren’t creative’, as if creativity is something you have or don’t have.

We’re naturally creative. But often as we go through school that creativity can become stifled. Art workers working with younger children note that they are typically wide open in terms of creativity in the stories they come up with, while adolescents tend to narrow down with their stories.

Perhaps there are good reasons for that. The ‘right’ answer is rewarded in most schools. Take the seemingly innocuous teacher’s habit of looking for students to finish their sentence, “The capital city
of the USA is...?”. The aim is to get the “right” answer. Someone pipes up with their response and it turns out to be wrong. They have ‘failed’, and they shrink in to their seat as someone else now puts up their hand and gives the correct answer. Isn’t this as likely to teach people to try to be right and fear being ‘wrong’, as teach them about the capitals of the world?

As young people enter their teens, social status among peers tends to become a far greater issue. Fear of judgement; not fitting in, looking uncool in front of peers, etc., can often discourage a person from deviating from norms. This would undoubtedly serve to block someone from expressing their creativity. After all, what is creativity if not deviation from norms?

Creativity is boundless. Ideas are a dime a dozen. But we can get attached to a ‘good idea’, as if it’s the only one we’re ever likely to have. Teaching people to let go of ideas and to avoid being ‘precious’ with ideas can encourage them to allow creativity to flow more readily. Starting can be as simple as aiming to come up with one really bad two-sentence story. Just two sentences. It can be that basic.
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STORY AND STORY TELLING

by Jane Lee

Some people think stories are a big thing. They’re not. They’re important, they can be powerful but they don’t have to be big. Look all around. Stories are everywhere. In tales that you tell when chatting with your friends, in jokes, in songs, on the radio, the tv, movies, books. As human beings we live and breathe stories. They form our identity. They help us make sense of the world. They entertain us. They shock us. Sometimes they provoke us. They give us an outlet for expression, communication and information.

Even when we’re not talking we’re still telling stories. Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of Silent Messages, found that only about 7% of meaning lies in the actual words we speak, the other 93% is non-verbal. This is why film-making can be such a powerful medium. It gives us the power to tell (and experience) stories through images, music, sound as well as speech.

A story can be as simple as a single glance, looking away and then looking back again or as epic as a Russian novel and twice as long. It entertains. It challenges. It helps us make sense of the world.

Give a person their right to tell a story and they are empowered. Strip them of that right and they are shackled. It is a huge abuse to silence a person. It is important to own your own stories and it is important that you tell the stories that are important to you. Mostly people want to hear stories from your point of view.

Stories can be funny, absurd, serious, happy, playful, dark, tragic. They’re about humanity and they cover the full range of human emotions. A good story contains truth. This doesn’t mean it is necessarily a true story just that it’s believable and something that someone watching can recognise and identify with. How often have you heard the phrase “It’s funny cos it’s true”? (Take Sminky Shorts for instance.) Likewise someone might come out of a movie and say “That film was lousy. The characters just weren’t believable” It doesn’t matter if your film is about real life characters or super heroes or vampires - your characters must contain some truth.
You should own any story you tell. This does not mean that it has to be original. (It can be but does not have to be) Traditionally stories evolve through constant retelling, and the same stories that were told years ago are still being told today - only from a different point of view. Gilgamesh was an ancient Japanese hero who overcomes over-riding evil with the aid of magical weapons... much like James Bond. In the words of Jim Jaramusch: “It’s not where you take it from, it’s where you take it to” (actually he stole that from Jean-Luc Goddard)

‘Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows. Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul. If you do this, your work (and theft) will be authentic. Authenticity is invaluable; originality is nonexistent. And don’t bother concealing your thievery—celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what Jean-Luc Godard said: “It’s not where you take things from—it’s where you take them to.”

Draw from that which moves you. Enjoy it. Relish it. No-one makes you become a film-maker. You do it because it is your passion. There are lots of reasons to make a film - there is a story you want to tell, a style you want to play with, a technology you want to develop, a team you want to work with. These are all good reasons to make a film. Find what moves you and let that guide you.

No one can tell you how to write a perfect story (though some may try) but you can be guided along the way. Learning to trust yourself and your ideas is an important step. Allowing those ideas to develop is another. Sometimes it takes courage, sometimes work and just sometimes a good story pops up from out of nowhere and demands to be told.

That’s why a lot of this course will be about play and experimentation... There is no single route for everyone to go down and come out fully packaged with the stamp of story-teller approval attached. What we will do is give you the space to play and experiment and to find out which methods work for you. Some of the games you may hate and some you’ll love but it’s different for everyone. As facilitators on this course we want to create a space for you to learn and discover things for yourself - what works for you and what doesn’t.

It’s not all free rein, however. Story is also about craft and we will share our knowledge of story-telling and how to hone the craft along the way. Guidelines on story telling have been built up over the years.
Rules are made to be broken but it’s handy to know them in the first place.

Films generate language through images. Music then adds another layer of meaning and emotion. In theatre the characters talk far more than a movie character ever will. This is because in film you have the opportunity to go right close up to the character and see what is going on for him. Film-making is learning a language. By learning how to choose various shot sizes, camera movements and angles you start to learn that language and develop it for yourself.

Every director has their own way of making a film. The same story told by Tim Burton will be different if it is told by Mike Leigh or Jane Campion or Quentin Tarantino. How boring would it be if all the films in the world were only created by one director? In the words of Anthony Minghella

“If you are a director you get paid to make decisions and to have choices and so you have to invest in some sense in your specialness. And I think one of the strange things about courses and tutors and books is that they suggest there is some other way to be other than the way you are that will launch you in a career. But of course all that anybody wants is your particularness, your specialness, what is unique about you and so the only course and the only advice that really matters is to discover what it is that is particular about the way that you look at the world and try and invest in that. To try and grow that individual course because that is what everybody wants.”

Even though each director brings their unique vision to a piece, a film is ultimately the result of a collaborative vision. The cinematographer, the composer, the editor - everyone works together layering up the piece until the elements combine to form the alchemy of that particular story.

Every decision that they make should be made to serve the story. No more and no less. In the end, it’s all about the story.
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Every decision that they make should be made to serve the story. No more and no less. In the end, it’s all about the story.
Learning Methods for Artists

by Andrew Monaghan

“Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me”.

Criticism and Feedback can be valuable tools for an artist. They help the artist to see their work with fresh eyes. It can help confirm which elements are effective and reveal areas that need further refining. Very often, the right feedback will give an artist the “Aha!” moment he or she needs to create a breakthrough. It can uncover something the artist overlooked which, now revealed, can be further refined. Often the artist already knew something was not quite right but couldn’t quite put their finger on it until they heard it from the perspective of someone else. When someone is able to clearly articulate their experience of a piece with some insight as to the reasons why they had that experience, we can say the feedback is constructive. It gives reasons.

In contrast, we might say someone’s feedback is unconstructive when it just gives the value assessment “this was boring”, without giving any other information, such as explicit reasons why the experience was boring for them.

Despite the obvious benefits of constructive feedback, there will always be feedback that is not going to be constructive. Unconstructive feedback is not inherently bad, but in many instances this feedback can be received and internalised by an artist in such a way that it impacts the artist negatively—sometimes with serious emotional consequences.

Not only can these moments spoil the fun which can be gained from performing and creating, it can become such a problem that many performers and artists mistake opinions and criticism of their work (whether positive or negative) as a measure of their own worth. When this happens, they are pulled away from the joy of creativity and subject to an unpleasant rollercoaster of experiences at the whim of other’s opinions of their work. The fear of criticism (or more accurately, the fear of their experience of criticism), can be enough to drive people away from their passion for performance and creativity.

But what if this was something that could be avoided? What if anyone with a fear of criticism and judgement could be liberated from it? What would be the consequences? For one, there would be nothing stopping them from sharing their work with others. And if they showed it to others and they weren’t reacting to negative feedback, they would be more likely to have curiosity about what the feedback means, “She doesn’t like it? That’s interesting, I want to know more about what this person..."
sees so that I can understand why she hates this even though I love it.” They would be in a far better position not just to accept people’s opinions for what they are, but also to take unconstructive feedback and, through genuine questions, make that feedback constructive. By doing so they can learn and grow from it when it’s useful, and accept it without any emotional charge when it’s simply down to personal taste. Because they would no longer be pulled in to the personal tastes and values of other people, they would stay centred in their own values. Right where they need to be to create their own unique work.

True knowledge and understanding of how judgement works can bring anyone to this place. Knowing how it all works and, crucially, having that knowledge available right in the moments when it’s really needed, removes the “negative” part of feedback. In fact, the unconstructive feedback is no longer perceived as ‘negative’ to the artist. It’s just someone else sharing their point of view. This allows the receiver to understand, and accept the other person’s valid point of view, extract the parts that are valuable and constructive for them, and disregard aspects as they see fit, which do not match their own experience, aesthetic and interests.

The truth is, a judgement of a piece says nothing about its artist – one can only ever judge the work produced in that particular moment in time on its own merit, and only in relation to the personal tastes and values of the judge. When an artist realises this, they can appreciate when others enjoy what they produce, but they don’t get dragged down by so-called ‘negative’ feedback. They’re free to stick with what’s important; having fun, sharing, learning, creating and expressing.

While leaders are naturally free to experiment with the LearningMethods exercises in the Appendices as they see fit, we do recommend that they consider taking LearningMethods classes. The training will help leaders learn the tools to understand and implement these ideas in many situations. By helping a person make sense of their own experiences it’s possible to lead a participant straight to an “Aha!” moment that can change their point of view for the positive. By undertaking LearningMethods, a leader will gain this learning for themselves. They can embody these principles in their own work so that they are able to lead by example.
THE COURSE IS MADE UP OF 7 DIFFERENT COMPONENTS

1. Drama Games
2. Learning Methods
3. Camera, Shooting & Editing Exercises
4. Story-telling and Writing Exercises
5. Videolog
6. Review of own work and work of others
7. Application of Skills to create a short film

LEADER’S SKILLS

A minimum of two leaders facilitate the course. Ideally they should have:

• a working knowledge of each of the course components.
• experience/ training in youth work.
• experience/ training in group work.

At least one leader should be practiced in the field of writing or film-making. It can enrich the course to invite in “experts’ for various aspects of filmmaking, such as writers, film-directors and actors, provided they adhere to the principles of the course.

Both leaders must be comfortable teaching drama games, adhering to the principles of improvisation - “Yes, and” and “giving focus.”

It is enough that the leaders stick to the broad concept of Learning Methods if no Learning Methods teacher is available.
1. Drama Games

The purpose of drama games is to make learning fun, break down barriers, improve being in the moment, stimulate the imagination, teach communication, stimulate creativity and storytelling and to develop skills in working together without panicking.

There are also specific drama games that teach actors how to attain believable characters, guide writers on how to structure a story and support directors and actors on how to work with each other.

When teaching Drama Games it is advisable for one leader to lead while the other observes to make sure that everyone is comfortable participating and to step in if anyone needs a partner or is having some difficulty.

2. LearningMethods

The purpose of LearningMethods is to help participants overcome anxieties and blocks to performance and creativity.

LearningMethods is an educational process that teaches a person how to explore, understand and solve problems and issues in their life and work. It teaches a person how to ask themselves the right questions about their experiences, how to call into question unexamined ideas and beliefs, and how to integrate change into their lives. The learning is intensely practical and grounded in real life, and this can help a person gain profound new understandings of their work and of themselves.

For leaders interested in the LearningMethods work, instruction is available with the Toronto-based founder, David Gorman via online teleconference sessions. There are also various other teachers available throughout the world and many of these too are open to teleconference tutoring and consultation. More information can be found at the website www.learningmethods.com.

Andrew Monaghan can also provide guidance and further details on the LearningMethods training. He can be contacted at amonaghan@gmail.com.
3. Camera, Shooting and Editing Exercises

Camera and Shooting Exercises are necessary to up-skill and improve basic film-making techniques. It is important to be thorough to ensure that everybody feels a sense of proficiency with the equipment. This improves their confidence and capabilities, and frees them up to be more creative.

4. Story-telling and Writing Exercises

The purpose of the writing exercises is not only to improve story telling skills but to allow more introverted participants to access and give rein to their creative side. Some people who struggle with the drama games really thrive with the writing exercises. For participants who struggle with writing and words it is fine to allow them to express themselves by way of pictures/storyboards.

5. Videolog

The purpose of the Videolog is to record progress and feedback from the participants. This involves shooting feedback from the participants at the start in the middle and at the end of the programme in order to get both their verbal feedback and to ascertain levels of confidence from their body language. Feedback is sought by a series of short questions.

6. Review own work and work of others

The purpose of reviewing own work and short films by other directors is to develop constructive analysis and self-knowledge, as well as gaining inspiration. It also gives participants a sense of achievement. Leaders should review drama exercises by asking for immediate feedback from participants and the audience and shooting exercises once they have been edited together. Leaders should also encourage participants to share the work that they have completed both on and off the course.
7. Application of skills to create a short film

Skills are applied through each participant writing their own piece and by everybody coming together to create a short film. In this way, participants can practice all they have learned and experience a sense of achievement about creating a finished product.
Course Outline

Outline of the Overall Structure

Day 1  Introductions and Icebreakers
Day 2, 3  Skills development
Day 4  Writing
Day 5  PreProduction
Day 6, 7,  Shooting & Editing
Day 8  Special Effects, Wind Down & Review

The following is a suggested schedule for the course, based on findings from the pilot workshop.

Detailed instructions of the individual games and exercises can be found in the appendices. The instructions are arranged in alphabetical order under the different course component categories. The appendices is available on www.firstcutfilmfestival.com

Instructions for many improv games can also be sourced online at: http://improvencyclopedia.org
## Day 1 – Introduction & Icebreakers

### Aims and Objectives

- Introduce and outline the course.
- Get familiar with one another and the space.
- Form a sense of a group through cooperating in activities.
- Shoot the first videolog.
- Have everyone handle the camera.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Introduction and Icebreakers</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10:00 - 11:30 | Registration  
Facilitator’s Welcome  
Establish Group Rules | Welcomes                        |
| 11:30 - 11:45 | Break                                                                                      |                                |
| 11.45 – 13.00 | **Name Games**  
Gesture Name Game “Yes”  
Tennis Balls,  
Pass the Clap | Drama Icebreakers  
Drama Icebreakers  
Drama Warm Ups  
Welcomes          |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | Lunch                                                                                      |                                |
| 14:00 – 15.15 | **Ice-breaker Games**  
Zip, Zap, Boing, Killer Wink  
Paired partner games | Drama Icebreakers  
Drama Icebreakers  
Camera Shooting   |
| 15.15 – 15.30 | Break                                                                                      |                                |
| 15.30 – 17.00 | **Rotate Stations of 3**  
How to Interview  
Record Videolog  
Experiment with Shot Angles  
Edit Shot Angles  
**Group Review of shots**  
**Closure**  
Magic Box | Camera Shooting  
Videolog  
Camera Shooting  
Camera Shooting  
Drama Warm Ups |
Day 2 – Creativity, Freedom from Judgement

Aims and Objectives

- Continue developing a group atmosphere.
- Introduce LearningMethods for judgement.
- Introduce exercises for creating stories, acting and directing.
- Loosen up creativity.
- Film scenes, focusing on film as a visual language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Creativity, Freedom from Judgement</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 11:30</td>
<td><strong>Warm Up Games</strong>&lt;br&gt;Clapping Games, Point &amp; Yes,&lt;br&gt;<strong>LearningMethods Talk:</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Co-Ordinating System&lt;br&gt;Our Valuing System</td>
<td>Drama Warm Ups&lt;br&gt;LearningMethods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45 – 13.00</td>
<td><strong>Drama &amp; Creativity Games</strong>&lt;br&gt;Word Association, Yes And, One Sentence Story, One Word Story&lt;br&gt;<strong>Devise &amp; Perform Scenes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Devising Scenes - Emotional Shift&lt;br&gt;Devising Scenes - Misconceptions - Part 1</td>
<td>Drama Warm Ups&lt;br&gt;Drama Games&lt;br&gt;Camera Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00 – 14.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 – 15.15</td>
<td>Review Short Films,&lt;br&gt;Devising Scenes Misconception - Part 2, 3&lt;br&gt;Storyboard “Misconception” Scenes</td>
<td>Review Films&lt;br&gt;Camera Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 – 15.30</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.30 – 17.00</td>
<td>Shoot Scenes for Misconception&lt;br&gt;<strong>Closure</strong>&lt;br&gt;Magic Box</td>
<td>Camera Shooting&lt;br&gt;Drama Warm Ups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 3 – Developing and Directing Characters

Aims and Objectives

- Introduce techniques for developing characters by accessing imagination.
- Encourage ‘acting without trying’ for natural performances.
- Introduce writing techniques.
- Edit misconception scenes from the previous day.
- Introduce methods for directing actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Developing and Directing Characters</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 -11:30</td>
<td><strong>Warm Up Games</strong>&lt;br&gt;Imaginary Object, Visualisation Game&lt;br<em>Drama Characterisation</em>&lt;br&gt;Characterisation through body, animal, verbs&lt;br&gt;CROW</td>
<td>Drama Warm-Ups&lt;br&gt;Drama Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:45</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45 – 13.00</td>
<td><strong>3 Stations</strong>&lt;br&gt;Writing Exercise - inspired by picture&lt;br&gt;Writing Exercise - One word a minute&lt;br&gt;Editing - Misconception Scenes</td>
<td>.&lt;br&gt;Storytelling&lt;br&gt;Storytelling&lt;br&gt;Camera Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00 – 14.00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00– 15.15</td>
<td>Discuss: Imagination and the Director&lt;br&gt;Directing Actors Game Part 1, 2, 3</td>
<td>.&lt;br&gt;Drama Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.15 - 15.30</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.30 - 17:00</td>
<td>Shoot short scenes based on Directing Actors Part 3,&lt;br&gt;<strong>Closure</strong>&lt;br&gt;Magic Box</td>
<td>Drama Warm Ups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 4 – Developing Themes and Writing

Aims and Objectives

- Inspire participants through various stories.
- Introduce elements of story.
- Write stories.
- Course Evaluation & Videolog.
- Choose which stories to shoot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Introduction and Icebreakers</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10:00 - 11:30 | **Movie Extracts**  
with a focus on story and themes  
**Warm Up Games**  
One word story, Word Association Game  
**Script Concepts** | Review Films  
Drama Warm Ups  
Storytelling |
| 11:30 - 11:45 | **Break**                                                        |                                        |
| 11.45 – 13.00 | **Open Writing**  
Story Development  
with leaders available for one-on-one  
**Videolog** | Storytelling |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | **Lunch**                                                        |                                        |
| 14:00 – 15.15 | **Evaluation**  
Script Development  
Talk on writing criteria & fine tuning | Storytelling |
| 15.15 - 15.30 | **Break**                                                        |                                        |
| 15.30 – 17.00 | **Present scripts to each other**  
**Forum for scripts**  
**Vote on which script to shoot**  
**Closure**  
**Magic Box** | Pre-production & Shooting  
Drama Warm Ups |
Day 5 – Pre-Production

Aims and Objectives

- Establish roles, schedules and filming locations.
- Edit Directing Actors Scenes from Day 3.
- Rehearse Director / Actor relationships.
- Encourage best practice in shooting.
- Encourage strong visual language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Pre-Production</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 -11:30</td>
<td><strong>Opening Warm-Ups</strong> &lt;br&gt;Read and Discuss Script &lt;br&gt;Edit scenes from Directing Actors</td>
<td>Drama Warm-Ups &lt;br&gt;Camera Shooting Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:45</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.45 – 13.00</td>
<td><strong>Pre-Production</strong> &lt;br&gt;Roles &lt;br&gt;Storyboard / Shot List &lt;br&gt;Locations &amp; Schedule List &lt;br&gt;Props/ Costumes List</td>
<td>. Pre-production &amp; Shooting &lt;br&gt;Storytelling &lt;br&gt;Storytelling &lt;br&gt;Camera Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00 – 14.00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00– 15.15</td>
<td><strong>Teams and Roles</strong> &lt;br&gt;<strong>Auditions</strong> &lt;br&gt;<strong>Directing Actors</strong> &lt;br&gt;with reference to the scene</td>
<td>Camera Shooting &lt;br&gt;Drama Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.15 - 15.30</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15.30 - 17:00</td>
<td><strong>Shoot and Edit rehearsal scene</strong> &lt;br&gt;<strong>Closure</strong> &lt;br&gt;<strong>Magic Box</strong></td>
<td>Pre-Production and Shooting &lt;br&gt;Drama Warm Ups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 6 – Shooting

Aims and Objectives

• Apply skills to date.
• Provide assistance as group shoots short film.
• Continue to refine team-work collaboration.
• Watch dailies and edit.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 11:30</td>
<td><strong>Opening Warm Ups</strong> for focus &amp; energy - clapping, tennis balls</td>
<td>Drama Warm Ups Pre-production &amp; Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:45</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 13:00</td>
<td><strong>Shooting</strong></td>
<td>Pre-production &amp; Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 – 15:15</td>
<td><strong>Shooting</strong></td>
<td>Pre-production &amp; Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 - 15:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30 – 17:00</td>
<td><strong>Dailies and Editing</strong></td>
<td>Pre-production &amp; Shooting</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Closure</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Magic Box</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Day 7 – Shooting

Aims and Objectives

• Apply skills to date.
• Provide assistance as group shoots short film.
• Continue to refine team-work collaboration.
• Watch dailies and edit

(note the schedule for the dailies might vary depending on shoot locations/ schedule).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 7</th>
<th>Shooting</th>
<th>Appendix Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10:00 -11:30 | **Opening Warm Ups**  
for focus & energy - clapping, tennis balls  
**Shooting** | Drama Warm Ups  
Pre-production & Shooting |
| 11:30 - 11:45 | Break | |
| 11.45 – 13.00 | **Shooting** | Pre-production & Shooting |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00– 15.15 | **Dailies and Editing** | Pre-production & Shooting |
| 15.15 - 15.30 | Break | |
| 15.30 – 17.00 | **Shooting**  
**Closure**  
**Magic Box** | Pre-production & Shooting  
Drama Warm Ups |
Day 8 – Post Production & Round Up

Aims and Objectives

- Edit short film.
- Add Sound Effects and Music.
- Get feedback by way of evaluation and Videolog.
- Round up the course, say goodbye and encourage future communication
- Have a screening of short film.

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Toward Confident Film Making started with the dual aims of guiding young people towards being more confident in themselves and in gaining confidence in their ability to create and write films and stories.

At the end of the pilot workshop, participants reported increased confidence in accessing their own creativity and sharing it with others. Naturally we observed improvements in their acting abilities and also in their ability to focus and work together as a group. We observed that towards the end they interacted on a more “genuine” level.

They made important connections among their peers which we now know were continued outside of the course. This confirms one of our aims, which was to encourage them to continue working together in their own time.

By its nature a pilot programme enabled us to test the workshop, and to make changes accordingly. The changes implemented in this workbook include: more shooting exercises; doing more to help participants up skill in shooting and directing; shooting only one short film and allowing more time, a full day, for rehearsal and pre-production.

We were impressed by how well the participants worked together. They created stories from their own unique perspective. Their hunger for courses of this level and intensity can not be understated and we agree there is a strong need for further development in this area.

There is a real desire among young people to do quality work with peers who share an equal passion. Courses such as this can provide young people with the structure to achieve quality work, allowing them to develop confidence in film making at all levels, both personal and professional.
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1-2-3

Icebreaker - “One-Two-Three” (Up to 15 mins)

Participants count to three in pairs.

Aims:

• Allow participants to have fun and connect with someone new.
• Get everyone present to what is happening in the moment.

Instructions:

Get players to walk around and then pair up with someone they haven’t partnered before.

The players in the pair face each other and take turns to count to three each person taking one number.

Instruct them to maintain eye contact.

Player A - “1”
Player B - “2”
Player A - “3”
Player B - “1”
etc

After they do this for a minute instruct them to replace the number 2 with a gesture such as clicking their fingers

Player A - “1”
Player B - clicks fingers
Player A - “3”
Player B - “1”
Player A - clicks fingers
etc

After they do this for a minute instruct them to replace the number 1 with a gesture such as stamping their foot

Player A - stamps foot
Player B - clicks fingers
Player A - “3”
Player B - stamps foot
Player A - clicks fingers
etc

After they do this for a minute instruct them to replace the number 3 with a gesture such as clapping their hands

Player A - stamps foot
Player B - clicks fingers
Player A - claps hands
Player B - stamps foot
Player A - clicks fingers
Player B - claps hands
etc

Ref:
http://improvencyclopedia.org/games/One_Two_Three_Four.html
Blind Man

Ice-Breaker - Blind Man (10-15 mins)

People pair up and lead one another around the space with the follower ‘blindfolded’. The leader can explain the space to the follower - either the real or an imagined space.

Ref: http://www.bbbpress.com/2013/02/walking-blind/

Aims:

• Build trust and also imagination.
• Give people a sense of responsibility for the safety of their partner.
• It’s fun.

Instructions:

Get participants to walk around and then pair up with someone they haven’t partnered before

Assign roles A and B.

A puts out his arm with his fist clenched.

B rests her arm on A’s arm and covers A’s hand with her hand and then closes her eyes.

A leads B around the room, making sure to avoid any obstacles.

A should move slowly and keep B comfortable at all times.

After walking in silence initially A could start to describe the scene (either real or imagined) to B

Swap roles.

Notes:

Make sure that only one and not both partners has their eyes closed.
Follow the Hand

Icebreaker - Follow the Hand (5 Minutes)

Actor’s face must follow director’s hand

**Aims:**
- To build trust between players.
- It’s an experience of ‘working together’.

**Instructions:**

**Step 1**
Get participants to walk around and then pair up with someone they haven’t partnered before

- Partners stand facing each other
- Assign one partner as A and the other as B

B is the director. He holds out his hand so that it is about 6 inches away from A’s face.
B slowly moves his hand. A must keep the distance from B’s hand at 6 inches at all times.
B is responsible for moving in such a way that A can keep up.

**Step 2**
After a couple of minutes instruct them to swap roles

**Step 3**
After a couple of minutes instruct them that they are both directors and actors simultaneously and that they must both now lead and follow together

**Notes:**
At times people will try to get the other person in to awkward positions “for the laugh”.
While it can be funny, get them to notice it’s at the expense of the other person. In a film-making team, we need to work together and “help each other out”. We need to work in ways that don’t strain anyone. Directors are responsible for the welfare of their actors
**Killer Wink**

**Ice-breaker - Killer Wink (10-15 mins)**

A simple game where players walk around the space making eye contact. One person is secretly the “killer”. They must try to eliminate other players by winking at them without getting caught by anyone else.

**Aims:**
- Encourages eye contact with new people.
- Have fun as a group.

Ref: [http://www.wikihow.com/Play-Wink-Murder](http://www.wikihow.com/Play-Wink-Murder)

**Instructions:**

Assemble the group into a circle

Tell them all to close their eyes

Walk around the outside of the group and taps one of the players on the back

This player is now the murderer.

Shout “Begin” The players must walk around the space randomly making eye contact.

The murderer kills the other players by winking at them.

When the murderer winks at a player that player must count to 10 and then pretend to die in a most elaborate fashion. They remain dead for the rest of the scene.

At any stage the other players can try to guess who the murderer is by shouting “I think it’s…”

If they guess wrong they too have to die elaborately.
Mirroring

Icebreaker - Mirroring (10 mins)

Participants pair up and take turns following the other's movements.

Aims:

• Ice Breaker that helps develop trust between participants.
• It's an experience of ‘working together’.
• Demonstrates the principle of “helping each other out”.
• It’s fun.

Ref: http://improv.ca/2009/12/mirrors/

Instructions:

Get participants to walk around and then pair up with someone they haven’t partnered before.

Partners stand facing each other.

One player leads, the other mirrors (or imitates) the action simultaneously.

After a few minutes instruct them to swap roles (without physically changing places).
Tennis Balls

Icebreaker - Tennis Balls  (Up to 15 mins)

Participants throw a ball to each other.

Aims:
- Ice-breaker and warm up game.
- Learn one another’s names.
- Establish eye contact.

Instructions:

Part 1 - basic principle

Get the group to assemble in a large circle

Find out the name of one participant e.g. Stephen.

“Stephen, I am going to throw you a tennis ball, when you catch it say “Thank you”.

When he catches it and says “Thank you”, instruct him to then call another participant’s name.

They next participant in turn must catch the ball and say “Thank you”, before passing it on to another person.

Let the group throw the ball around for a little while. Often at this point people get excited and start throwing the ball without asking first. Make sure to stop the game and reiterate this point, as it is essential. Tie this in to other situations, such as when we “talk over” one another rather than listening to what the other person is saying and recieving that first before saying something yourself. It’s not uncommon for group members to throw information at someone while their attention is focused on listening to somebody else. When a group communicates without listening and receiving, we drop a lot of information.
Part 2 - Create a pattern

To get to the next part of the game, stop the balls from being thrown - a good time to do this is when someone throws it back to you. Just hold on to it.

This time the aim is to create a pattern so that the ball travels to every participant in the circle with each person receiving and throwing the ball only once. In other words, you can only throw the ball to someone who has not received it yet.

Give participants this instruction and make sure they toss the ball to someone new each time. It should eventually come around full circle to the original thrower (you).

Once the ball has gone around to everyone full circle, a pattern has been established. Tell everyone to pass to the same person they did last time. Begin again, starting with you throwing the ball to the same participant.

Let the game continue going.
Continue to add in more and more balls.

This generally leads to chaos. If this is the case, stop the game again. Instruct the participants that they must now only throw when they know that the recipient is ready to receive. The recipient should therefore be aware that they will be receiving a ball and when they hear their name called, they should make eye contact and nod to the thrower. Only when the thrower receives the eye contact and nod should they try to pass the ball. This can again be tied in to other communication situations - only when someone is able to receive our communication should we try speaking. Otherwise we are adding to the chaos.

This last element helps bring some control back in. You may need to stop the game and re-emphasise this at times.

Part 3
Once they are comfortable in that pattern stop them randomly. Whoever holds the balls keeps them and everyone walks randomly around the room.
Shout “Stop”, to get everyone frozen in place. From where they now are, they have to continue throwing the balls in the same pattern as before.

**Part 4**

Take away the physical balls and tell them to throw imaginary balls.

They have to receive the imaginary ball that is thrown to them. For example, if someone mimes a huge ball, the receiver must catch that huge ball. If someone mimes rolling the invisible it along the ground, the receiver must be catching a ball rolling on the floor.

If they like they can walk around as they do this. They must still call each others names before throwing and they should still acknowledge catching the balls with thanks.

**Notes**

It can seem chaotic when there are lots of balls in the air but if you have clear lines of communication and a clear idea of what your task is then everything is manageable.

Conversely if someone throws too many balls at you or if everyone is throwing balls at you then you cannot catch them all.

**Notes:**

This is an important understanding on a film-set - especially for a crew to know this when dealing with a director. The director can only take one comment at a time, but the tendency in film-making crews is for everyone to throw their two cents at the director all at once which creates pandemonium on-set.
Walking in Space

Icebreaker - Walk in the Space

Aims:
• Get participants comfortable with the space and people around them.
• Allow them to make their own choices in a safe environment.

Instructions, Part 1

Ask everyone to walk around the space, exploring every corner and taking the time to move in any area they haven’t been in yet.

Part 2

Ask them to move slowly toward the centre of the space, making the space between people tighter and tighter.

Part 3

Tell everyone to walk quite quickly.
Tell everyone to walk as slowly as possible.
Tell everyone to walk backwards in the same direction they last came from.
Invite everyone to walk anywhere in the room at any pace.
Warm Ups/ Close Downs - Boss and Employees (5-10 minutes)

The Boss tries to sit on an empty seat which his employees seek to fill.

**Aims:**
- Have fun.
- Illustrate how ‘pressure’ we put on ourselves can make us act unproductively.
- Encourages trust and teamwork.

**Instructions:**

Get everyone to get a chair each and place them randomly around the room and then all sit on their chairs.

Ask one player to stand at one end of the room, leaving one empty chair. This player is now the “Boss” The others are the employees.

The Boss walks slowly towards the empty chair. The boss must always walk slowly.

The employees switch seats to fill the empty chair. The employees can move as quickly as they like.

Once an employee makes a move to leave his/ her seat they must follow through, even if someone else has already taken the empty seat.

The Boss seeks to sit on the empty chair.

Once The Boss sits on a chair, the employee who is left standing now becomes the Boss.

**Notes:**

This is a game that demonstrates how quickly you can put pressure on yourself.
Magic Box

Warm Ups/ Close Downs Magic Box - Closure Game

Aims:
- Create a space where people can voice thoughts, complaints and concerns without judgement.
- Bring closure to a day by getting participants to reflect on what they enjoyed/ felt anxious about during the day.

Instructions:
Gather the group in a large circle.

Explain that the magic box is invisible and floats on the ceiling. To get it down everyone must reach up and pull it to the ground. Reach up and get everyone to follow. Pull the magic box down.

Let everyone know they must now take the lid off. Mime reaching for the lid and get everyone to follow you as you pull the lid off.

Now explain that with the magic box you can do two things: You can either put in bad stuff that you want to get off your chest, or take out good things that you want more of - or both, or neither.

As an example:
Mime putting in: “Frustration when things don’t go according to plan”
Mime pulling out: “having fun, meeting people”.

Have the next leader to do the same - either taking something out, putting something in, or both.

Give every participant in turn a chance to say something, or pass if they don’t feel like it.
Paranoid Tag

Warm Up Game - Paranoid Tag (5 minutes)

Aim:
• Have fun, raise energy levels.
• Become aware of how needlessly you can put pressure on yourself.

Instructions:

Just like regular ‘tag’, there is a person who is ‘it’.

They try to chase everyone and tag someone else to make them ‘it’.

With paranoid tag, however, anyone who is about to be caught by the person who is ‘it’, can call someone else’s name out.

If they do so, that person is now ‘it’.
Pass the Clap

Warm Up Game: Pass the Clap

Aims:
• Gets group working together.
• It’s fun, builds energy and focus.

Ref: http://improvencyclopedia.org/games/Pass_Clap.html

Instructions:

Get the group to assemble in a large circle

One player starts by throwing a hand clap to the neighbour on her right, and the neighbour passes the clap to his right hand neighbour

Play this till the clap flows nicely around the circle.

Then tell the group that players may decide to pass the clap back to the neighbour they got it from

Variation:

Player makes eye contact with her neighbour. They both open their hands and clap together.

The neighbour turns to his neighbour and repeats the process

Start slow and then build up the tempo

Notes:

This helps to build up communication. When working in a film-making team each team member must be aware of what the others are doing and ready to do his/ her task efficiently at the right moment.
Warm Up Game - Pass the imaginary object. (5-10 mins)

**Aims:**
- Encourages imagination, collaboration and creativity.
- It’s fun, builds energy and focus.

**Instructions:**

Group gathers in a circle.

Leader starts by miming an object. It can be anything, a sword, a ball, an apple, a motorbike, etc...

The leader interacts with this object and passes it to the next person on their left.

The next person must take the same imaginary object and also interact with it before transforming it in to their own object. Again, it can be anything.

When they have interacted with their own object, they pass it on to the next person on their left, who must again interact with the same object before making it their own.
One Word Story

Warm Up Exercise: One Word Story

Using just one word per participant, the group attempt to create a fully formed story with a beginning, middle and end.

Aims:

• Illustrating the required aspects for a clear story: beginning, middle and end; introducing elements, etc.
• Learning to build a story using what came before you.

Ref: https://files.nyu.edu/jcs474/public/theaterimprov.html

Instructions:

Gather the group into a circle

Player 1 starts a story with one word

His neighbour adds to the story by adding another word as does her neighbour.

Encourage the group to constantly build on what came before and to work together to bring the story to a conclusion.
One Sentence Story

Warm Up Exercise: One Sentence Story

Building on ‘Yes And’, the group collaborate to form a story with a beginning, middle and end.

Aims:
• Create a story.
• Reveal story-telling and collaboration principles.

Instructions:

Gather the group into a circle

Player 1 starts a story with one sentence

His neighbour adds to the story by adding another sentence as does her neighbour.

Encourage the group to constantly build on what came before and to work together to bring the story to a conclusion.
Word Association

Warm Up Game - Word Association (20 mins)

Group gather in a circle and take turns coming up with a random word inspired by the word before it.

Aims:
• Encourages Creativity.
• Encourages people to be present and responsive.
• Warm up for story-telling.

It works by triggering related concepts, which stimulates neural pathways and allows for more possibilities.

Instructions:

A player says a random word e.g. Cat.

His neighbour says the first word that comes to their mind when she hears the word “cat” e.g. “Dog”.

Her neighbour must now say the first word that comes up for them when they hear the word “Dog” e.g. “Bark”.

Begin the game with a noun rather than more abstract things like verbs, which can be harder to visualise.

Notes:

Some people may feel that because the group has been moving at a certain pace or rhythm, that there is a need to ‘keep’ that rhythm. This puts them under pressure if a word hasn’t come up yet. It may be necessary to reassure them to take the time that it takes as long as they don’t over think it.
Staying in the moment.
Notice if participants are coming up with words that seem better associated with the word that came a few before the last one.

e.g.
Person 1: “Berry”
Person 2: “Twig”
Person 3: “Nest”
Person 4: “Juice”

Notice that person 4’s word, ‘juice’ seems more associated with person 1’s suggestion, ‘berry’. The inspiration for their word should come from the word JUST before theirs. You will notice at times that a person is still ‘latching on’ to a word that came two or three words prior. This is a sign that they are not present to what is happening in the moment.

**One Word Association Variations.**

Part 1
Play One word Association as normal performed as a group in a circle.

Part 2
Play One Word Association in pairs, with people facing back to back.

**Pressure**

Some people said they found it harder one way than the other. At this point we collected their experiences.

Some people found it to be more of a pressure when they were in a pair, because they felt they “needed to keep a pace”. This is very common in this game, as well as in other facets of creativity and life. While ‘keeping the pace’ sounds like a good thing in theory, the fact is for many activities we can only go as fast as we can go - and no faster. If we are trying to go faster than we can actually go, we feel “pressure”.

Warm Up Game: Yes And (10 mins)

Aims:
• Teaches the process of creative collaboration.
• Reveal ‘blocks’ that prevent groups from creating ideas.
• Introduces a principle of collaborative story-creation.

Ref: http://plays.about.com/od/improvgames/qt/YesAnd.htm

Instructions:

Gather group into a circle

Player 1 makes a statement
e.g. “Today I went on holiday”

His neighbour agrees and elaborates by saying “Yes, and...”
“Yes, and I brought my surf-board”

It continues around the circle with everyone accepting and elaborating on what went before

Variations:

As the group become more confident they could begin creating roles.

At the beginning of the scene, Character #1 will begin by establishing setting and plot.
Character #1: What a hot and miserable day to be a ranch hand!
Following the “Yes And” method, Character #2 will accept the premise and add onto the situation.

Character #2: Yep and the boss said we don’t get no water until this fence is mended.
Character #1: Yes and ain’t he the meanest cuss we’ve ever worked for?
Character #2: Yep and it’s made me think about leaving behind this cowboy life and headin’ off for San Francisco.

Now, the scene could continue on indefinitely with the actors simply agreeing with one another. However, it’s best to develop conflict as well. Even though the performers constantly affirm each response doesn’t mean they can’t argue. For example:

Character #2: Yep and it’s made me think about leaving behind this cowboy life and headin’ off for San Francisco.

Character #1: Yes and you’d be broke twenty minutes after stepping off the stage coach.
Character #2: Yeah and I supposed you think you could do better?!
Character #1: Yes! And after I made my fortune panning for gold I come back and buy this sorry ranch and you’d be working for me!

After working on “Yes And” exercises, actors ultimately learn how to do scenes in which they embrace the ideas and concepts offered by fellow performers. You don’t actually need to say the words “Yes And” for the system to work. Simply affirm what the character is saying and allow it to build the scene.

If you deny your fellow performer, here’s what happens:

Character #1: What a hot and miserable day to be a ranch hand!
Character #2: No it’s not. And we’re not ranch hands either.
Then the scene is dead in the water before it even had a chance.

Notes:
Never deny your fellow actor. Instead, you should be willing and able to accept the ideas the character conveys.
A director and actor can co-create using the principles of “Yes, And”
Warm Up Game: ‘Yes, Nod’. (5-10 mins)

Aims:
- Get people interacting and cooperating.
- Encourages eye contact.
- The last step in the game encourages participants to pay attention to everyone else.
- It also serves as a way to recall people’s names.

Instructions:

Step 1
Group are gathered in a circle.
Leader demonstrates by pointing at someone and saying their name.
Leader then instructs the named person to say “Yes” in response.
Leader walks slowly towards the named person’s place and, as they are slowly walking, explains to the group that the named person must now point at someone else and say their name.
The next person whose name has just been called must say, “Yes”, point to someone else and say their name before they can move, and so on.

Let this go on for a while. To begin with it may need repetition for people to get the steps correctly.
Participants shouldn’t move from their spot until they have received a ‘Yes’ from the person they point to and name.

Step 2
When the group begin to do this well, take away an element; now they simply point to the next person without saying their name. The recipient must still say, “Yes”, and point to the next person before they themselves move.

Step 3
After this has gone on for another few moments, take away another element; now the recipient does not say, “Yes”. They just make eye contact and nod to the person pointing. At this point there should be silence in the group.
Step 4
The last thing to be removed is pointing to a recipient. Instead, participants must simply make eye contact with the person they want to swap with. In response, that person should simply nod.

This will become confusing to follow if people are moving before acknowledging a nod, as the eye contact and nod tells everyone where the focus is. It may take a few moments to get the group flowing silently without hitches.
Warm Up Game: Zip Zap Boing (5-10 mins)

Aims:
• It’s a fun way to start the day.
• Helps raise energy levels.
• It helps participants interact.
• It’s a way to become more aware of the present moment and the group.

Ref: http://dramagames.info/2011/07/03/zip-zap-boing/

Instructions:

Step 1.

Group assembles in a circle.

One of the players points to the neighbour on her right and says ‘Zip’

This neighbour turns to the neighbour on his right and says ‘Zip’

The ‘Zip’ is passed around the circle in one direction.

Step 2.

At any time any player can say ‘Zap’ to the person pointing at them.

When they do that the player who says ‘Zip’ must change the direction of the pointing, saying ‘Zap’ and pointing left.

‘Zap’ travels around to the left until there is another ‘Zip’ which once more changes direction.
Step 3.

Lastly the person that receives the ‘Zip’ or ‘Zap’ may elect to yell ‘boing’ and point at someone anywhere in the circle.

That player then restarts the ‘Zip’ going in the direction of their choice.

The group must really pay attention for this to work.
Drama Game And Exercises
Interacting with different intentions (10 - 15 mins)

Players interact in pairs without trying to act, just use their imagination.

Aims:
- to encourage people to use their imagination to change their expressions, tone of voice and gestures naturally while acting, rather than consciously trying to do so.

Instructions:

Part 1
Have participants pair up.
Assign a Person A and a Person B in each pair.

Person A smiles at their partner, using different intentions. Emphasis should be placed on people using their imaginations to create their expressions. They are not to ‘try’ to do faces, they’re not to ‘act’. Just make believe.
To aid this, leaders should create little scenes. The more description, the easier it will be for the actors to make believe:

Examples:
Without trying to do anything - no faces, no gestures, simply imagine this scene. You are sitting in a cafe. Opposite you is your partner, who is your best friend - they have been away in Australia for five years and are back on a flying visit. As you sit here drinking your coffees, you realise that this is the first time you have been with your best friend in five years. You’re sitting in a cafe after a long ‘catch-up’ chat where you were both laughing for almost an hour. There is a brief calming in the conversation, and as you look in to the eyes of this friend, you realise nothing has changed. You realise just how much you care about this person and how special this relationship has been for you...
- You’re a boss in an office. Your partner is an employee. You’re not happy with them because they haven’t been making it in to work on schedule. As a result, others in the office are having to go out of their way to make deadlines. They are currently on a phone call - it sounds like it’s a family call, yet they’re in the office during work hours.

Without trying to change how you look and without trying to do anything, now simply imagine this employee gets off the phone and admits to you they are having marital trouble, which is why they have been so unreliable these past few days.

**Part 2**

Gather the experiences of both parties.

**Person A**

Ask each of the actors for their feedback. Were they able to stay in your imagination most of the time? If not, what stopped them? (The things that pull someone away from their imaginations are usually ‘blocks’, such as fear of judgement from others, looking silly, etc.)

If they were in their imagination, how did they find the different scenes? Did they feel that their ‘coordinating system’ was responding differently to the different imagined situations?

Ask the Person B’s to give feedback.

Did they notice changes in the other persons expressions? Did they find their responses believable?

Use the feedback to reiterate that acting will happen more effectively when it’s done with just imagination.
Drama Game - Create Characters through Body Sensations

Aims:
- Introduce a technique for developing character.
- Learn to act naturally from imagination rather than emoting.

Instructions:

Instruct the group to walk around through the space in a random fashion.

Now shout out a body part... e.g Chin......

Each person should allow this body part to lead their motion.

Doing so will influence the way a person moves.

Ask people open questions to get them thinking on their own experience:

Do you feel changes in how you’re moving?
Do you notice changes in your breathing changes?
Do you notice any changes in muscular tension?
Notice, is there tension in different areas?
Have you noticed any emotional change?
What sort of character would move around like this?
How would they relate to other characters?

Now shout out another body part... Chest....

Notes:

Characters can be strongly defined by the way they move, and having a particular way of moving might help you to come up with a character. For instance:

Leading with the head, someone stuck in forward planning, worrying,
Leading with the chin... someone ignoring what is going on around them

Leading with the chest - someone who puts on a 'hard front', with a militaristic approach to living and relating with others. “Life is hard”.

The stomach, someone who is motivated by their cravings and senses.

The feet, someone cautious, unsure of where the next step will take them, etc.
Characterisation through Animals

Drama Game - Imagination Exercise 2: Animal Work

Aims:
• Introduce a technique for developing character.
• Learn to act naturally from imagination rather than emoting.

Instructions:

There are a set of procedures participants can take themselves through which give them a sense of how to infuse a character with animal characteristics. The example here uses a cat:

Begin by allowing people to walk around the room freely. After a moment, invite them to find their own quiet area of the room and close their eyes. They are encouraged to allow themselves to delve right in to their imagination:

You are invited to forget about everyone else in the room for the next few minutes. As you imagine, you are free to move around the space.

Imagine in your mind now an alley in an urban area. Perhaps it’s somewhere you’re familiar with.

What does it look like?
How is the weather? Is it quiet?

Now imagine an alley cat. What does it look like?

How does it move? Is it cautious, or bold, uncaring?

Where is it now in the alley? Where is it going to?

Now, imagine you are suddenly becoming that cat and looking out through its eyes. What does the environment look like from your new perspective? What do you feel? What do you smell?
Are any threats in your area - how do you move as you consider this? Are you in your own territory, or is it some other cat’s?

Imagine you now see another cat. How do you respond to that cat? How do you move? Allow yourself to move in the space now as that cat. Remember this is for you - we are all in our own imagination - nobody else cares what you’re doing. Feel free to go down on all fours and move around as a cat.

After some moments:

Now close your eyes and imagine you are still that cat, but now you are taking that cat in to a Pixar movie where you are anthropomorphic, a human-esque cat, walking on its hind legs. You can speak and you can do normal human like things, but in many ways you are still a cat.

If you are on the floor, take time to come to standing now. Now you are in an area with other Pixar-type cats. How do you feel?

In this human form, how do you feel about the space? How do you move? How do you talk? Go interact with these other characters now.

Final Stage:

Now imagine your human-esque cat gets a human body. You know you are still a cat but everything about you now is human. Everyone thinks you are a human. You do not do any of the things a cat does. But you still think like that cat. How do you feel about the space? How do you interact with the characters around you?

Notes:
This is an acting technique which can be very effective for creating a character. Just thinking of an animal and letting your character become ‘infused’ by the traits of that animal, without overtly acting like an animal, can be very effective.
Characterisation through Verbs (20-30 minutes)

Drama Game - Characterisation through Verbs

Aims:
• Introduce a technique for developing character.
• Learn to act naturally from imagination rather than emoting.

These exercises allow participants to sense that while ‘verbs’ can describe human movement, they can also influence human movement. Some actors and writers therefore find them useful, since a character’s movement will be formed by his intention. Laban is a movement framework which developed a ‘dictionary’ to describe all forms of human movement. Part of the Laban work is called, “The Eight Efforts”, which describes different intentions in movement:

1. Punch / Thrust
   Direct, strong, sudden

2. Slash
   Indirect, strong, sudden

3. Push
   Direct, strong, sustained

4. Wring
   Indirect, strong, sustained

5. Dab
   Direct, light, sudden

6. Flick
   Indirect, light, sudden

7. Glide
Direct, light, sustained

8. Float
Indirect, light, sustained

Playing with these ideas, either in movement or in acting and writing, can create a very wide range of possibilities which are often outside of our normal range. As with anything that goes outside of the habitual, it can feel uncomfortable, weird or wrong. But part of the benefits of this movement work is that it is outside of our comfort zone and therefore can help us expand our boundaries.

This exercise can take a while if you go through all eight of the efforts. You may decide to just demonstrate some of them depending on how much time you have, and how interested the participants are.

Instructions

Have participants move around the room and stop. Invite them again to close their eyes and just be aware of themselves and the support of the floor underneath them. This exercise is for their own personal experience and is not for anybody else.

Explain the Eight efforts and how it applies to acting and writing characters and the ways in which it is relevant to the course:
If you have a line of dialogue, you can use these effort verbs as a way to experiment with different ways of delivering the dialogue. If you are writing a character, you can use one or two of these verbs to create the character, exploring how they make decisions and interact with other characters in their normal state or when they are under threat.

Ask participants to begin moving around the room.

Begin to describe the first of the Eight Efforts, “Punch / Thrust”. It is direct, strong and sudden. Ask participants to begin embodying that verb. What way would you move if you were to punch or thrust
your way around the room?
You may find a few people miming swordplay or boxing, remind participants that this is not to be taken literally, but rather the sense of the intention behind that sort of movement should influence their normal walking pattern. You should find that participant’s gait is changing.

Ask people open questions to get them thinking on their own experience:

Do you feel changes in how you're moving?
Do you notice any changes in your breathing?
Are there any changes in muscular tension?
Do you notice any emotional change?
What sort of character would move around like this?
How would they relate to other characters?

Asking these questions can help people gain a better grasp the experience as it is registered more consciously and ‘verbally’.

While they continue to walk ask them to now just return to their normal selves walking in the space. Encourage them to notice the change in their sensations and experience as they return to their normal walking state.

After you’ve allowed a brief moment for people to settle back to normal, move on to the next verb, ‘Slash’. Slash is indirect, strong and sudden. Unlike punch/thrust, which is muscular but direct, slash is wild and unfocused. How does ‘slashing’ influence your walking? As you think of slashing your way around the room?

Again, ask people open questions to encourage them to consciously register their own experiences:

Do you feel changes in how you’re moving?
Do you notice any changes in your breathing?
Are there any changes in muscular tension?
Do you notice any emotional change?
What sort of character would move around like this?
How would they relate to other characters?
Allow space for them to return to normal walking. Move on to “Push”, again defining it in relation to the previous verb. Push is direct, strong and sustained. It’s constant, a constant effort against a heavy object or objective. How does this influence your walking?

Again, go through the list of questions.
Allow time for people to return to their normal walking before moving on to the next verb, repeating the process.

Notes:

Often it’s the unexpected that makes a character dramatically interesting. As an example, we call a baddie ‘two-dimensional’ if she’s always angry, shouting and growling and punishing everyone - even her minions. We can add depth and unexpected elements to a character quickly and easily by playing with these verbs. What if a villain has a line of dialogue like, “I am going to kill you and your entire family”. The typical thing with this would be to play it really dark and growly. But that’s obvious. What if you were to allow the verb ‘Dab’ to influence how you spoke and acted that line? What about ‘Glide’? How would the villain behave then? It would almost certainly add more nuance and depth to the character. You’re not a one-dimensional baddy.

Similarly, if you are writing a character, you can use these verbs as a way to add depth and back story, or to decide how that character might normally relate to the world, perhaps using a second and third verb to influence how they react under pressure and in other situations. If you need a back story, you then just need to fill in the reasons why they would behave that way. The hero doesn’t have to be brave and fearless. What if when you first meet the hero they are ‘slashing’; prickly and terse?

Writing in this order, with their behaviour coming first and their reasons for doing so after, can be easier to write than the other way around - our minds are good at filling in the blanks, we do it all the time in real life. Writing a character in this order, You just need to ask things like, “What has happened in the protagonist’s life that makes them ‘slashing’ in their normal life?” Now we know that a big part of a story is that the character changes. So you can choose another action to decide how the character will behave when they have had a change in their world. Perhaps at the end of the story they ‘Glide’. They are healed of their past hurts and have become masters of themselves.
Creating an Imaginary Scene

Drama Game - Creating an Imaginary Scene

Using ‘one word association’ to tell a story, but this time the group attempt to collectively imagine a scene which will be visualised in the space in the middle of the circle.

**Aims**
- Tune in to own and each other’s imagination.
- Build a scene through co-creation.

**Instructions**

Gather the group into a circle and ask them all to sit down.

Instruct one player to imagine an object in the centre of the circle and to state what it is.

Their neighbour now imagines and states another object that comes to mind

As they continue they will build a scenario out of which can come a scene.

**Notes:**

Games like this help players to tune into each other’s imagination which is important for writers and directors to communicate and co-create.

A director might co-create a scene with an actor in this manner, by giving the actor a scenario and then asking to describe what he sees in the scene, how might he react to it. It is a powerful way for an actor to access their imagination.
CROW - Applying some Techniques

Drama Game - CROW

Crow stands for **Character, Relationship, Objective, Where**

**Aims**

- To create a foundation for building stories.
- To learn to devise and co-create.

**Instructions**

Create some very short scenes in pairs using the CROW device

Instruct players to walk around randomly and then choose a partner that they have not worked with before

Each player thinks of who their own character is (leader could suggest that they access a character by thinking of an animal)

The players then construct a relationship, objective and location for their characters.

The players improvise a very short scene together based on their CROW

They do not perform in front of an audience just in their pairs

**Notes:**

It is good to have participants do quick exercises in pairs to co-create and then work with a new partner.

Some participants found this challenging and so we as leaders stepped in to partner them on their first attempt. With some others who were struggling we made suggestions for their CROW but as far as possible we left it for the participants to do the creation.
Devising Scenes - Emotional Shift

Drama Game - Emotional Shifts (20 mins)

Develop stories around shifts in emotion.

**Aims:**
- To devise and create a short story.
- To learn about change and conflict in story-telling.

**Instructions**

Divide the group into 3 groups of 4 people.

Ask them to develop short scenes to ‘justify’ a change between two emotions, such as:

Sad to happy.
Delighted to terrified.

Each group should rehearse on their own

Each group performs their scenes in front of the others.

**Notes:**

A story often hinges on that moment of change or conflict.
If something always continues to be the same for a character then there is no story.
Drama Game - Director-Actor (40-50 minutes)

This is an exercise with three main stages. The aim is to build on what came before. Starting with the actor simply being in their imagination and eventually ending with the both the ‘director’ and the actor developing a situation for the character.

**Aims:**
- To teach actors to not emote but work with their imagination and act naturally.
- For a director and actor to co-create.
- To build imagination and scenes.
- It’s fun.

**Instructions:**

**Part 1 (6-10 mins)**

**Aims:**
- Encourage actors to not ‘emote’, but just imagine they are this character doing this activity.

**Instructions**

Pair Up.
Assign Partner A and Partner B.

Participant A starts as actor.
Partner B observes.
Participant A simply pretends they’re a character that is ‘being’ in some mundane situation or activity. This can be someone checking their text messages, watching TV, waiting in a queue, eating, etc.

After 2-3 minutes, partners swap.

A observes.
B acts everyday activity.
Part 2 (15-20 mins)

Aims: Get actors and directors co-creating a scene to change the actors performance. Teach directors how to change an actor’s behaviour from the actors point of view.

Change partners.
Pair Up.
Assign Partner A and Partner B.

Partner A starts as actor, acting out an everyday mundane action.
Partner B directs.

After first allowing Partner A to establish the action.
Using ‘CROW”, Partner B begins to ask:
Who are you?
Where are you?
What are you doing?
How do you feel?
Why do you feel that way?
What is your motivation for doing what you’re doing?
Where were you earlier?
Etc.

The actor creates the scene from his/ her imagination

Rotate roles

Part 3

This time, B directs A in to changing the actor’s mood using questions.

Leaders should demonstrate before doing this: E.g.
Leader 1: Where are you?
Leader 2: At work. In the cafeteria.
Leader 1: How do you feel?
Leader 2: Annoyed, angry.
Leader 1: Why do you feel that way?
Leader 2: I’ve just had a run-in with my boss. He’s been bullying me. It’s been going on for some time.

A director can change the actor’s mood by directing from the character’s perspective. If the director wants the actor to change from feeling annoyed and angry to feeling glad and hopeful rather than simply saying, “Be more angry”, or “Now act like you’re happy with what has happened”, a different, more constructive approach can be used:

Leader 1: Imagine your character has been in this job for 10 years, and has consistently had run-ins with this boss, who is a bully to others also. When you first started in this job you had your doubts. In fact, there’s been another opportunity on the horizon but you have put it off because you are so used to this job. It was convenient to stay here. As your character realises that this job has never been a good fit and there is a possibility for something else, how do they feel?

Leader 2: This recent situation is just the push I needed to change things. This could be the beginning of something new and exciting.

The exercise illustrates that it’s about intention and imagination and that effective directing can be about getting at the point of view of the actor, not telling them what to do. Furthermore, working with an actor from this point of view is easier for the actor and often more effective.

Instruct B to direct A in a similar manner before swapping roles.

A should have time to settle into his / her role before B begins questioning.

Notes:
This is an extremely beneficial and enjoyable exercise where participants learn to co-create.
Doctor’s Office game

Drama Game - Doctor’s Office (30-40 mins)

A group of actors pretend they are sick people waiting in a doctor’s office.

Aims:
• Encourage people to act naturally - without trying.
• Learn not to ‘try’, to do nothing but be in the role.
• Allow any interactions or actions to come out of the character’s motivations, not out of the actor’s discomfort, or the actor trying to ‘be funny’ for the audience.

Instructions

Form 3 groups of 4 people.
Have a row of 4 chairs in front of the rest of the group. This row will be the ‘doctor’s waiting room’.
Have each member of the group decide on an imaginary ‘ailment’. Have them use some characterisation techniques to decide on their character.
Will they have the characteristics of some animal? Where is their pain?
How do they relate to the pain?
Are they all-engulfed and distracted by it, trying to get away from it?
Accepting of it?
Where is their attention? In their pain? On the time? Staring at some point in the waiting room? Etc.

Each group of four comes in and sits down, with audience watching. The group act out this moment without dialogue, without ‘trying’ to act.
Two line Scene - using CROW

Drama Game - Two Line Scene - Exercise (Up to 15 mins)

Players create a scene with 2 lines of dialogue only

Aims:
• Devise Scenes with Actors and Directors
• Learn that a story is not about the dialogue but the action around it.

Instructions

Split participants in to 4 groups of 3.

Assign each group two lines of dialogue written on a piece of paper. e.g. “Are you alright” “Yes. I’m fine”
or “Oh! It’s you!” “Who were you expecting?”

Each member of the group is given a few minutes to write a scene based on the two lines. They cannot add to these lines although the scene can be as long as they like.

Participants take turns being a director, directing the other 2 in the group.

The groups then perform their 3 individual versions to the rest of the participants.

Variations:

Use the two line scene as a shooting exercise.
LearningMethods

What is LearningMethods?
LearningMethods is an educational process that teaches a person how to explore, understand and solve the problems and issues in their life and work. It teaches a person how to ask themselves the right questions about their experiences, how to call into question unexamined ideas and beliefs, and how to integrate change into their lives. The learning is intensely practical and grounded in real life, which can help a person gain profound new understandings of their work and of themselves.

Blocking in Writing
LearningMethods has a useful role in this workshop because of it’s ability to identify and change blocks to performance and creativity.

As an example, everyone knows about “writer’s block”, a common problem for writers where something prevents them from putting their ideas down on paper. LearningMethods can help a writer to identify and understand the something that stops them from writing. Through understanding and identifying the problem, it often changes by itself. Sometimes further steps are needed, and the LearningMethods work teaches one how to set up practical experiments to further change and improvement.

LearningMethods can also help performers and actors to uncover the root cause of ‘stage fright’ and other forms of nervousness that can pop up when someone feels they are in a judgement situation. Through understanding, it is possible to become completely free from issues like nervousness, anxiety and stage fright.

For leaders interested in the LearningMethods work, instruction is available with the Toronto-based David Gorman via weekly online teleconference sessions. More information can be found at the website www.learningmethods.com. For further reading, the LearningMethods website also has a series of articles relating to various blocks and personal issues that were resolved.

Andrew Monaghan can also provide guidance and further details on the LearningMethods training. His contact information is available from his website amonaghan.net
In particular is a highly recommended article relating to stage Fright, “Good For Whom”: http://www.learningmethods.com/goodforwhom.htm
This piece describes how one adult student applied LearningMethods to her own issues of stage fright as well and issues around judgement and values.
Alexander Technique ‘Intention’ Exercise

**Aims:**
- Introduce another means of developing character.
- Demonstrate how physical subtlety and nuance can happen for an actor without them having to directly do something physically themselves.

**Instructions**

Have participants pair up, ideally with someone they haven’t worked with yet.
Have partners stand opposite each other along opposing sides of the room (in a moment one of them will walk across the room towards the other).

Assign which side of the room will be moving first. Advise the ‘recipients’ of the handshake, those who will be standing still for the first half of the game, to notice how the other person sounds as they move, how their handshake feels, how they feel as the person approaches them.

Instruct the hand-shakers, who will be moving across the room, not to ‘do’ anything to change their physicality, but just to let the following thought influence them:

1. Before you go to shake the other person’s hand, place your intention on shaking that hand. That is all. ‘Narrow’ your focus on their hand. Just really have a sense that this is your objective and the purpose of your moving and you want to do it now.

   Allow them to move across the room to shake the recipient’s hand and return to their original position. Remind the recipients to silently note how that felt, what they heard, what it felt like to have the person approach them.

2. Before you go this time, notice the support of the floor underneath you. Notice how it gives you support. Your intention is still on shaking the person’s hand, AND you are also going to include the sense of the floor underneath you as you move.

   Allow them to cross the room, shake hands and return.
3. Before you go this last time, notice the support of the floor underneath you, as before. Also include the sense of the space between you and the recipient. And the space behind and above you, which you can’t see but you can sense. Notice the space is visible in your peripheral vision. Notice that as you move towards the recipient’s hand, which is your goal, that the space between you is still there and the support of the ground underneath you is still there. Allow them to cross the room, shake hands and return.

At this point it may be worthwhile asking the recipients what their experience was. Did they hear the difference of the sound of people’s footsteps? The first time is invariably heavier and more rapid.

How did the first handshake feel compared with the last? It’s almost always tighter and with more tension.

How did it feel having the person approach them the first time compared with the second time? Was there a difference in how you interacted with one another? Ask the ‘shakers’ for their own experience.

Before swapping over and letting the others experience the other side, it might be a good time to bring in the bigger-picture relevance of this exercise.

Notes:

As an actor, you can alter your physicality totally by simply changing where you put your intention. Such as by putting their fixation on a goal. We often pass runners on the street who aren’t present in the space around them, they are often tense and grimacing. They may have their attention in their physical pain, or their breathing, or they are focused on their destination - even if that destination is not visible, they are thinking about it. And sometimes we pass runners who seem to be very much in the moment. Their gait is usually softer, there is often less tension, less pounding, their breathing softer, they are rarely grimacing and more likely smiling.
We can see business people who are doing something similar; clearly not present to the world around them. They move in a rushed and tense manner with a slight forward lean. Nobody decides to make these things happen, they just happen as a consequence of operating in that way of “I must get to this place”. They may not be present to the space around them, but they are very present to the meeting they must get to in twenty minutes. As an actor, you can achieve that attitude easily, simply by projecting your attention off in to this imagined future goal or imagined destination that you must get to.

With the second and third ones, you can play with space and a sense of support. When people don’t have a sense of their own support, they can become unbalanced and clumsy. You can play with ‘moving’ your sense of support in the space around you - but never under your feet. By doing so, you move drunkenly without you having to do anything physical to do so.

Conversely, if you want to play a person who is serene and centred, you don’t need to pretend you are - serenity and centredness happen when you are in the centre of your support, aware of the ground beneath you and the space around you. If you are in the centre of your support, you will act like a character who is relaxed and present because you will be more relaxed and more present.
The Coordinating System (15 mins)

This is an introduction to how our human system organises itself around how we perceive situations. It is put in the context of ‘I fear my art/performance/myself being judged’.

**Aim:**
- To illustrate a concept without too much verbal instruction, of how our human perceptual system organises the rest of our system to create our physical, mental and emotional experiences.

This is a precursor to an introduction to LearningMethods: The Valuing System. Typically this work is taught to adults who have come specifically for help with issues like Stage Fright. This demonstration was created to illustrate in a more lively way how different people can have differing, often opposing, experiences (physical, emotional and mental) of the same ‘thing’, e.g. the weather.

It aims to demonstrate how our perspective can create our physical experience, not necessarily a situation itself. (i.e. If I’m annoyed by rain, I do not feel annoyed because “rain is annoying”, but rather because “I perceive rain as annoying based on the significance of it to me”).

It attempts to illustrate (more so in the next exercise) that we do not evaluate ‘a situation’, but rather there is a 4th hidden element to a value assessment and that is an individual’s ‘Criteria’. (i.e. “I think he is stupid - but he is only stupid according to my personal set of criteria”).

**Instructions, Part 1:**

1. Ask for two volunteers who are comfortable performing in front of the group.
2. Everyone else’s role will be as observer
3. Without any observers hearing, assign each actors one of the following characters:
The Wedding Planner
It’s the day of your sister’s wedding and you feel a huge pressure for the day to go well. You feel the pressure because your wedding gift to your sister was to plan the entire ceremony. You loved the idea of an outdoor wedding, and insisted the happy couple have theirs outdoors. Your soon-to-be-wed sister didn’t like this idea because she has dreamed of this day her whole life. She wants it to be perfect. The weather hasn’t been so good of late. She would have preferred it indoors to be on the safe side but because you’ve been so excited about the outdoor idea she’s let it pass. Right now, everyone except you is indoors having a glass of wine before the ceremony. You are outside putting some final touches on the decor and making sure all the chairs placed out in the lawn are aligned.

The Farmer
You live in another part of the world. You and your family depend on the small farm which you tend to with your brother. Not only do you depend on the food to eat, but the surplus is sold to pay for taxes and bare necessities. The weather has been so hot and dry these past few weeks that the local streams have dried out, and with it your irrigation system no longer works. Your crops are starting to wither. You have received a notice that your taxes are overdue. And to add to the worry, your grain supplies are running dangerously low. You do not have enough money to buy more at the market to feed you and your family. Added to this, the weather forecast is saying it could be months before there’s rain again. If the rain takes that long, this season’s crop is guaranteed to fail. You’re currently on your way to the local village to beg the merchants to lend some grain. Your family’s life depends on it, but the odds are slim.

Part 2: Set the scene.
The two characters are separate, in their own parts of the world. Both actors are instructed to simply respond in a way that feels natural to their character given what is going on for them and where they are going. Advised the scene will be given instructions in a moment. Describe the scene: (it’s hot, dry and sunny). Remind them to think about their situation: “How do you feel about today? How does this affect your body? Invite the audience to notice any differences in their behaviour (if the actors are able and comfortable performing, the difference will be noticeable). Now announce that, out of nowhere, it has suddenly began to get cloudy and dark. Within moments there’s the sound of thunder, and they can smell the air cool. With another bang of thunder it suddenly begins to pour rain. It’s so heavy they can hear nothing but the sound of rain smashing. Again ask them how they feel in this moment. What is their reaction? Can they embody it?
4. Pause the scene.
With the actors responding, instruct the actors to stay in character but freeze on the spot as if time had stopped.

5. Ask the rest of the group:

Q. When this scene began, did one character seem happy and one seem unhappy?
Q. What do you think each of these characters is reacting to? (They will likely say, “the rain” or “the weather”).
Q (Bringing attention to first actor) Based on their reaction, what do you think this character thinks of the weather?
Q (Bringing attention to the next actor) And what does this character think?
Q (Bringing attention to the next actor) And the next?
Q. If they haven’t said anything explicitly, how can you tell what they think and feel? (They will likely respond with, “their body language”, “how they were behaving”, etc.)

Thank the actors and invite them to return to the group.
The Value System

Aims:
- Make sense of the 4 fundamental elements of a Valuing Situation
- Clarify what is being valued in a value situation and what is not being valued.
- Explain how value assessments are an experience within an individual and not a part of the thing being valued.
- Show how feedback comes from someone’s own personal values.

Part 1

On a whiteboard create space for 4 categories.

Ask for feedback and opinions on a movie likely to be well-known to your target group - preferably a divisive one that have some people saying it’s brilliant and others saying it’s terrible (one that comes to mind is the ‘Twilight Saga’ series).

Ask for feedback on what participants think of the movie, asking for opinions. There is likely to be a mix of people saying it sucks, it’s amazing, etc.

Title the top left column ‘high value assessments’, compile a list of positive assessments, e.g. “it’s action packed”, “the acting is fantastic”, “the plot is really engaging”, etc.

Title the top right column, ‘low value assessments’, list the Criteria for negative value assessments, e.g. “it has too much action”, “the acting sucked”, “the plot is boring”, etc.

Explain the 4 Elements of the Value System (Reference in next section).

‘Plug in’ some of the participant’s suggestions in the value system - it is usually rare for someone to give more than their value assessment (bad, good, stupid, ‘too much action’ etc.). Therefore it’s highly likely that anyone will have mentioned anything within the ‘Criteria’ Category.

Point out that this is missing, important information. The ‘Criteria’ is the invisible information that gives us our value assessment. It’s the useful bit for artists, because it tells us if the value assessment has merit which can be used to improve our work, or if it’s down to personal taste.
Valuing Situation (explained)

A valuing situation is any moment when we’re making a value assessment. “It’s a nice day”, “He’s a bad teacher”, “I’m hungry”. These experiences are known as ‘value assessments’. Judgements or more neutrally, ‘Value, Assessments’ have four elements to them. Most people are aware of (though even then, often misunderstanding) three of the four elements. Often the fourth element, ‘Criteria’, is not even recognised at all in the moments of an actual value assessment.

The four elements of the Value System:

1. The Valued
2. The Valuer
3. The Value Assessment
4. The Criteria

Select one or two suggestions from the board from the ‘value system’ exercise, and begin to plug them in to the 4 Elements of a Value Situation.

E.g.
1. The Valued: the acting.
2. The Valuer: ‘John’
3. The Value Assessment: Bad.
4. The Criteria: ..... 

Perhaps if there is a volunteer you can ask them if they know what their criteria are. Often they are not quite sure until they think about it for a moment. Even then they may just up with another value assessment:
“What is it about the acting that you find bad?”
“I don’t know, it’s just crap!”
“Crap in what way?”
“It’s really fake”.
“Fake compared to what?”
“How real people would act”. 
It’s common for us to experience our opinion as if it is a property of the thing being valued. E.g Jill tastes a cake and perceives that it has a property called ‘nice’ which to her, will seem as if it’s a physical property of the cake. Yet Jack tastes the exact same cake and to him, the cake has a property called “horrible”

Every person has their own sense of what appeals to them; their likes and dislikes. Often we don’t fully realise that this experience of liking or disliking something is not a property of the thing being valued. A cake cannot have properties called ‘nice’ and ‘horrible’ at the same time. They’re completely opposite values, so it doesn’t make sense. It is clear that there is something else going on. If Jack and Jill don’t realize that it’s not quite the cake that they’re talking about, they could very well end up arguing:

**Part 1 - Misunderstanding a Value Assessment Situation**

1. “Jack, have you tasted this cake? My god, it’s lovely”
2. “What?! ...What? ...It’s ....disgusting...!”
3. “Disgusting?! You have no taste!”
4. “Fine! You can fetch that water on your own, then.”

In this example, neither Jack nor Jill quite realise that it was their own personal values which gave them the experience of liking the cake, which is why this kind of discussion happened. Look what happened:

1. Jill shares her experience of the cake (her value assessment).

2. Jack mistakes Jill’s value assessment as a property of the cake, (“what? It’s disgusting”). He’s surprised (and irritated) that she could think a disgusting cake is nice. Because he is mistaking his personal experience as of disliking the cake a property of the cake, when Jill’s experience does not match his own, it’s somehow irritating to him. This comes across in how he responds to her.

3. Jill notices Jack’s agitation and reacts defensively. Since they are both mistaking their experiences, it somehow becomes a question of who is ‘right’. Jill see’s Jack’s value assessment as being ‘wrong’. She likes the cake, which is obviously nice. She knows she is right because it feels right to her and how dare he even suggest otherwise. Therefore Jack is wrong in thinking the cake is disgusting. He has “bad taste”, because it doesn’t match her taste.
There is nothing like a feeling to make something feel real.

1 (b) Our experiences and ‘value assessments’ come from within ourselves. If there is nobody there to value the cake, it does not have any value. It is not good or bad. It simply is. But we can have position experiences within our own nervous systems which feel good or bad to us. We experience reality through feeling, so we will tend to feel like that cake really is nice, or disgusting. But we can learn to get clearer on this.

When we are clear about this right in those moments that are most important - such as in moments like Jack and Jill’s argument, we will be far more likely to see things clearly and therefore respond appropriately. If we’re not confusing the value assessment of something as being a property of the thing itself, we can instead get more curious about where everyone’s value assessment is coming from:

**Part 2 - Accurately Interpreting a Value Assessment Situation**

1. “Jack, have you tasted this cake? My god, it’s lovely”
2. “That’s interesting Jill, I actually found it disgusting! What do you like about it?”
3. “Hmm, it’s got raisins in it and it’s creamy”.
4. “Ah! Okay, actually I do like the creaminess but I can’t stand raisins”.
5. “What? You don’t like raisins?! ...but they’re lovely?”
6. “I can see why people like them but to me, the texture is tacky and I don’t like that personally”
7. “Fair enough...can I have yours?”

Notice in this version, Jack is very clear that value assessments come from within a person. It only takes one person in a conversation to know this to avoid misunderstanding:

1. Jill shares her experience of the cake (her value assessment)

2. Jack notices they have opposing views of the same thing, but he’s clear it comes from personal preference. He knows it’s down to his personal tastes, so it’s not a problem for him if someone has a different experience. Instead of getting defensive, he’s actually curious about what creates such a difference in their experiences and he asks questions out of interest.

3. Because there is no emotional charge to Jack’s question, Jill does not react either. She’s more likely to just share her experience.
4. From Jill’s feedback (I like raisins and the texture), Jack is actually able to get more clear on why he himself doesn’t like the cake, and even realises something about the cake he does like. Because he’s not reacting he was curious and asked for further information, which actually filled gaps in know understanding. The additional information perfectly explains Jill’s differing experience.

5. Jill does not know about value assessments and is still seeing things from the common point of view where the thing being judged has objective qualities, so she’s a little confused and defensive that Jack doesn’t like raisins.

6. Because Jack does not see it that way, he does not react to her slight defensiveness about raisins. Instead, he’s able to give Jill his reasons why he personally doesn’t like raisins. He does not react to her defensiveness because he understands that her defensiveness just comes from seeing Valuing Situations in a certain way. He’s been there himself after all, and understands that her differing perception says nothing about him and his point of view and everything about Jill’s.

7. The conversation never becomes heated, because one person is able to see things clearly. In this case, Jack is able to give a neutral response simply because he is seeing the situation in a way that would not generate an emotional charge. Because of his way of seeing things, he’s also better able to extract the reasons why someone has a value assessment (their Criteria), and share his own reasons (his own Criteria) for his value assessment. By doing so he can have an interaction with someone else without unnecessary turmoil, get to know the other person a little better, and also the other person can learn more about him. It’s a constructive interaction.

**Using ‘Criticism’ constructively**

Imagine a baker asks Jack and Jill for their opinion on a new currant cake recipe he’s developing. Jill only says that the cake is “okay”, and Jack only says it’s “disgusting”, this gives no useful information to the baker. If the baker is mistaking how judgement works, he might even feel a little upset about the feedback, “The people I asked don’t really like my new cake recipe. Maybe there’s something wrong with it. or maybe I’m just a useless baker and always has been, since I can’t even make a good cake”.

If, however, the baker is aware of how value assessments work, he could ask Jack and Jill better
questions to get a clearer and more constructive idea of their individual points of view. For example, if the baker is testing a new currant cake recipe. By asking questions he discovers that Jack finds the cake horrible because he doesn’t like raisins. If that’s the case, then Jack’s feedback is not at all useful for this particular cake. It’s a currant cake, it’s supposed to have raisins. Jack simply doesn’t like raisins, the cake is not good for him. And so this cake would simply not be to Jack’s taste - or others who share Jack’s taste for raisins. It’s not a problem with the baker’s new currant cake recipe, it’s not a problem with the baker’s skills. Rather, this is a cake for raisin lovers. The baker is clearer now, and knows to disregard Jack’s feedback since this cake is not for his taste.

He could use Jill’s feedback to adjust the recipe accordingly if he believes the feedback would be useful. Let’s say he asks Jill why she only thinks the cake is “okay” and not amazing, and she explains that it’s not creamy enough. She loves a creamy texture. The baker values ‘creaminess’ too, and thinks this cake has just the right creaminess for his taste. But he knows that’s not a problem with his tastes, he’s not ‘wrong’ about how creamy the cake is. He can ask her more questions about what she would want. Perhaps it turns out that she loves actual whipped cream like a ‘Queen Cake’, and is comparing the currant cake to her “creamy ideal”. If the baker decides that the currant cake has an appropriate texture, he is perfectly free to make a cake to his own taste if he choses. Or if he wants, he could experiment with a queen/raisin cake if he wanted. There is no right or wrong. There’s just differences.

The same is true regarding performance. Imagine Jack and Jill go to a movie together. Jack likes realistic true to life dramas while Jill loves fantasy and adventure.

E.g

Jill: “That movie was terrible!”
Jack: “Why do you say that?”
Jill: “I don’t think that the characters acted authentically”
Jack: “What do you mean?”
Jill: “Well, they didn’t do what I would do”
Jack: “I thought they were brilliant”
Jill: “Why?”
Jack: “They each had their own motivation and they acted from it with passion and verve. Apart from Cecilia. I don’t believe that she really would have poisoned her mother for the jewels”
Note that initially the reaction was, “The movie was terrible” as if the movie had a quality called ‘terrible’. If the director were to hear this feedback only on this surface level, it could be quite confusing, upsetting and off-putting.

But when a director can realise that a person’s evaluation (crap) comes from their point of view, he can instead ask guided questions to uncover that point of view. By doing so, he can find the reasons why an audience member is giving him feedback and he can hold on to the bits that he personally values. He’s also able to learn from that feedback if it’s found to be useful.

If the producer is making a children’s fantasy and the feedback about the characters not being believable comes from an adult, then there would likely not be much of a need to develop the Cecilia character, since it would probably just go over the kids heads. So he could take that feedback with a grain of salt for his particular aims. However if he were developing a family movie and his goal for this was to keep everyone in the audience suspending their disbelief, knowing that the Cecilia character is ‘not believable’ to some adult audience members may highlight an area he needs to further develop to make the character’s actions make more sense to adult viewers.
Imagination and the Coordinating System

A guided exploration to demonstrate how an actor can achieve subtle expression without having to ‘do’ anything other than use their imagination.

**Aims:**

- Identify an alternative to ‘emoting’, a term used to describe when an actor is ‘trying’ to get their emotional state across to an audience in an unbelievable way.
- Demonstrates how our human coordinating system handles the minutia of physical expression for us.

**Instructions:**

**Part 1**

Group gathers in a circle with their eyes closed.

A leader describes a setting which participants are to imagine happening:

You are in a bright room with big open windows. It’s warm. Beams of light can be seen shining in to the centre of the room. You can smell baking, It smells of warm buttery cookies. Really take in that delicious smell.

In the centre of the room, bathed in bright light is a large oak table. It’s much larger than you are. In the centre of this oak table is a fruit basket.

You move towards the table and see a bright yellow lemon on the top of the basket. You take this lemon in your hand. It is waxy and soft to the touch. You take a knife to the lemon and slice it in half. As you do so, there’s a light spray of juice sprayed in to the air around you. You catch the smell.

You take one half of the lemon and hold it up to your mouth and squeeze. The juice pours over your tongue and in your mouth. Really taste that lemon juice.

The group can now open their eyes. Ask for a show of hands of how many people’s mouth watered
when they thought of the food cooking, or smelt the lemon juice as it sprayed, or tasted it in their mouth.

If participants are engaged with their imagination, they will almost certainly experience these responses. If someone has difficulty imagining the scene, this might indicate certain ‘blocks’. For example, if someone has their eyes closed yet is embarrassed about the idea of someone else watching them do the exercise, their imagination will already be engaged in “imagining other people looking at me and judging me”. We can only imagine one thing at a time. If we’re busy imagining people judge us, there will be no way to imagine biting in to a lemon.

When people are unable to access their imagination, they are likely to begin ‘trying’ to act, or to ‘emote’. They know they’re not feeling anything, so they’re trying to ‘make’ it happen. But it’s rarely believable. If someone frowns and affects their voice to sound sad, we can usually tell it’s not real. When someone really is sad it’s undeniable - without them doing anything, their entire being is affected by sadness. When we imagine emotional situations, our system will respond, just like it can be when we imagine biting in to a lemon.

The most common reason is that they are being distracted by some sort of interference. The LearningMethods work can be used to address these interferences so that someone can easily access their imagination and act believably without any ‘trying’ or effort.
Script Concepts

**Aims:**
- Inspiration. Hothouse Ideas.
- Warm up towards making a story
- Review of different methodologies of creating a story.

**Instructions:**

Gather the group into a seated circle on the floor.

Do one round of a clapping game to raise energy and focus. Do one round of word association.

Invite them to co-create a story based on the different parameters that we had touched on to date.

1. A story around a change of emotion... e.g from scared to happy or angry to giddy.

2. A story based on conflict.

3. A story based on a political or personal issue.

4. A story from a misconception.

Share own examples of creating stories, if necessary.

**Notes from Pilot Workshop:**

This was a slow starter for us. Concentration had waned. It was only when we started giving personal examples of our own short stories that everybody tuned in and started to go “yes, but what if...”

From this point onwards they became enthused and started to co-create. They came up with ideas that were distinctly their own and not memes - for instance one of the stories created was about a homeless man who goes around collecting unwanted emotions in his trolley. He takes them off and turns them in to something positive.
Script Development

**Aims:**
- For everyone to write or co-write a short film script.

**Instructions:**

Provide a space where participants can either work together in small groups or on their own to write.

Give them access to a computer and the internet so that they can share their own work if they like.

Provide them with paper, pen and blank storyboards if they need them.

Instruct them to take the time to write a short film that they would like to see made, possibly in this space or possibly at some time in the future.

Leaders should be accessible for advice and/ or inspiration but should give the participants as much space as they need.

Leaders could leave a poster on the wall with the basic tenets of script-writing:
- Beginning, middle and end.
- Character, Conflict and Change.
- Truth not actuality.

Leader then works with the individual groups to get them to format their script into a proper format.
Writing based on “Annoying / Inspiring”

Aims

• Inspiration. Hothouse Ideas.
• Warm up towards making a story.

Instructions

Ask participants to write one very annoying thing and one thing that makes them happy on a piece of paper.

Put all of the annoying pieces of paper into one pile and the inspiring pieces into another pile.

Let each participant pull out a piece of paper from each pile.

They now have to write a story around the two concepts that they have been given -either in script or storyboard form.

Notes:

Again remind them of how great stories are often invoked from change of emotion.

Also if you find something annoying, chances are somebody else does too. Creating a fictional story around a real emotion can help give that story a sense of ‘truth’ or actuality.

If discussions occur based on the ideas evoked rather than writing, the leaders can allow this and possibly enter into the discussions. This can also help bring out creativity, confidence and ideas. The aim is to evoke inspiration and not necessarily to have anything written down. We found that at this station, participants really started to open up about what annoyed them and what insecurities regarding creativity they had.
Writing Discussion

Sit down with the group in a circle to discuss writing.

Discuss personal process as well as some basic techniques such as set-up and pay-off or beginning, middle, end and characters and conflict.

Give examples of own experience, inspiration and stories.

Stimulate a conversation with participants about stories in general and stories that they might have in mind. We sat down with the group to talk about processes for writing.

Emphasise that everyone can write but everyone has their own process. Sometimes it’s just a matter of finding one that suits you, and no one technique will work for everyone.

Notes:
We gave examples of our own experience and our own stories. Participants found this very engaging and responded in kind.
One Word Per Minute Writing Exercise (20 mins)

**Aims:**
- Inspiration.
- Free Up Creativity.

**Instructions**

A leader compiles a list of words chosen at random from pages of any book. Using a stopwatch, the leader calls out one of these random words for each consecutive minute.

The participants start to write a story with a beginning, middle and end. At the very beginning and every minute afterwards, they hear a random word. They should integrate that word into the story, allowing it to take on whatever direction it invokes until the next random word.

When the group finishes the leader can use the same words with the next group, or use new random words if they so choose.

It is a useful time to talk about how words can prompt creativity and if we just go with these words, stories can come out.
Freewriting with pictures as inspiration

Aims
- Inspiration.
- Free up Creativity.

Instructions:

Leader creates / brings in pictures.

Let each member choose a picture.

Ask them to think of what the picture evokes for them.

Instruct them to write a story or draw a storyboard using the picture as an inspiration.

Leave them alone to write by themselves.

This station does not need a leader. The group is left to their own with pens and paper and crayons, so they could either write or sketch out a storyboard. Beanbags are a good alternative to chairs to allow participants to feel comfortable and able to access their own intuition.
Editing scenes:

**Aims**
- Review work to see what worked well or not.
- Learn some of technicalities of editing.
- Learn about visual language.

**Instructions:**

Using an editing program like Final Cut Pro or even iMovie, create a rough assembly of the short pieces that they shot.

Point out the basic features of the editing suite so they know how to do their own basic edits.

Seek their advice in choosing which order to place the clips, tying it in with the writing theme of how to structure a story.

If they are undecided or if there is a “better” way, for example a sequence which corresponds with cinematic conventions, show them options and allow them to choose which they prefer.

As you edit, point out what worked and what didn’t work in the shooting process for being able to create a finished piece, giving advice on how to shoot to edit in the future.

Editing gives participants a payoff on their work, as well as providing feedback on what worked. A great deal of learning can happen through editing. Participants may see the produced material and be unhappy with it. It’s important for them to realise that what doesn’t work is not a ‘failure’, but useful information which can be used to find better approaches and techniques. Implementing these realisations and learnings is how filming skills are developed.
Movie Extracts

Watch and discuss short films and movie extracts.

Aims

• Inspiration.
• Learn how other film-makers structure a story.
• Learn more about visual language.

Instructions

Present short films to the participants of 60 – 90 second duration.

Show films once without analysis and then a second time after analysis... this time possibly stopping and starting the clip to illustrate the point.

Some good shorts can be found on http://www.filminute.com or http://www.thisisirishfilm.ie/shorts/ or http://www.youtube.com. It is worthwhile mixing independent shorts with some mainstream clips.

If leaders have created any short films - they could present them, discussing their own themes and methodologies.

Discuss symbolism, themes, structure and narrative.

Discuss how each film allows the information to unfold.

Discuss how the director draws the eye to particular characters or events in a particular scene.

Allow opinions to emerge, giving participants the chance to voice what they liked or didn’t like.

With any luck this will lead them into discussing films that they have made, would like to make or have enjoyed watching.
The sound person shouts “Speed” if everything is fine with the sound.

Assistant Director shouts “Clapper”.

Clapper steps in and claps the clapper board at the camera’s point of focus (usually just in front of the actors face) ensuring that it all can be seen by the camera.

Clapper shouts “Scene x, Shot x, Take x”.

When the clapper has exited the scene and is quiet.

The director shouts “Action”.

The actors act.

At the end of the scene the director shouts “Cut”.

**Step 3.**

Rotate participants efficiently between the roles.
Camera Settings

Aims
- To ensure that everyone is aware of required settings for camera.
- To ensure that everyone is comfortable with handling the camera.

Instructions

Stand in front of the group with a camera hooked up to TV display.

With one of the three camera settings incorrect, ask questions of the group about what needs to be changed.

Explain to them why the setting is wrong and how to fix it. Repeat the same for the other two basic settings.

Demonstrate to groups of 4 how to do the settings. Pass the camera around and ensure that each participant is comfortable in operating the camera.

Always check these camera settings for consistent and professional camera work. It is best to keep each of these settings on Manual.

Exposure:
Set for every change location / lighting

White Balance:
Set for every change location / lighting

Focus:
Set for every shot

Sound Levels:
Check for every shot. Always monitor with headphones.
Exposure: How bright or dark the picture is.

Measured in F-Stops – and then dB. F-Stops relate to the manual iris on the camera – f8 – iris 1/8 open f/4 iris 1/4 open, etc. At F0, the Iris is fully open and now the camera reverts to digital enhancement to increase light. You know you have manual exposure selected on the camera if there is a bar on the display screen with a + and – sign at either end.

To Set – A choice of 2 options:

(1) on the body of the camera on the left is a silver button. Press it so that the exposure bar appears. Press it again and that bar disappears. If the bar is present it means that you are using manual exposure. Next to the silver button is a toggle with which you can adjust the exposure.


A good exposure exists when your subject is clearly lit without details being washed out by being over-bright (exposure too high) or lost through being too dark (exposure too low).

White Balance: The colour tone of your picture. Different light sources emit different colour hues. Natural light can cause a picture to be too blue (cold) while artificial light can be too yellow (hot). If the camera knows what white is in a particular environment it will set all of the other colours accordingly.

To Set:
Go to P-Menu – Menu – Camera Settings – White Balance – One Push
Get someone to hold up a white sheet for you in the area that your actors will be.
Press the symbol with the square and 2 triangles. It will flash intermittently. When it has stopped flashing your white balance should be set.

Note: if the icon flashes, your white balance is not set. Make sure that your exposure is right because sometimes it will not work if the exposure is set too high or too low.

To play: you can deliberately make the colours different on your camera by showing the camera a
different colour than white. If you hold up a blue sheet for instance (cold) the camera will compensate by bumping up the yellow (hot) tones instead and you will have a yellow looking shot.

**Focus:** How sharp or blurry your picture is.

Set to Manual – There is a button on the side of the camera close to the lens where you can choose Automatic or Manual. You know you are on manual when there is an icon of a hand on the screen. As you adjust your focus numbers will appear to tell you the distance from the point of focus.

To Set:

Zoom in to your actors eyes. This is important for two reasons:
1. With the small screen on most cameras it’s easy to misperceive that a subject is in focus. By zooming in you get more detail on the small screen which allows you to ensure your subject is in focus.
2. By decreasing your depth of field, the camera’s focus point becomes more accurate.

Adjust the focus until the picture is sharp using the focus ring at the front of the camera. Zoom out to the desired shot size.

Note: you could zoom in, click to auto focus and when the camera has found the correct focus point click back to manual again.

**Sound:**

A clear sound signal comes in around 12 dB.
Too low and you need to pump up the volume later when editing (and this increases the system noise – hiss).
Too loud and the sound will clip and distort.

There is a sound bar on your screen. You know that the sound is too loud when the bars hit red.
To Set:
Have your actors and your microphone in position.
Shout “Quiet for Sound Check”:
The actors perform their lines at the same level as the real thing.
Press – P-Menu – Menu – Standard Settings – XLR – Channel 1 – Manual and adjust accordingly by pressing + or -. You are aiming to get their speech around the 12 dB mark. At no stage should the sound clip. You may have to do the same for Channel 2.

Notes: Reverberation and Background Noise can also affect the sound quality of your piece. Reverb refers to echos. These are caused by big empty spaces and hard surfaces. Reverb can be lessened by having soft furnishings in the room.

Try not to have too much background noise that competes with your actors. It can always be added in after but not taken away.

Point your microphone towards the actors and away from the background noise.
Devising Scenes - Misconceptions

Exercise - Misconceptions - From Drama to Film:

Create short scenes based on the theme of ‘misconceptions’.

Aims:
• To build from acting and directing a drama to shooting a scene.
• To learn the visual language of story.
• To demonstrate how a turning point in a story might work.

Instructions:

Step 1:

Drama of Misconception.

Break the group into 3 new groups of 4.

Instruct them to devise a short scene around the concept of misconception - give a few examples to illustrate.

Give them space to devise their own stories, only helping out when people appear to be struggling.

Ask them to perform their scenes in front of everybody.

Step 2:

Demonstration - Shot Sizes and Angles.

Aim:
•Show some captivating, interesting and fun short movies that illustrate principles of camera-work and story-telling.

Give them a sense of “film language” before they shoot their own short films.

Present 3 x 1 minute movies. Play it through once so that everyone can enjoy the story and discuss its impact.
Play it again, this time pausing to break down the technical aspects of the film e.g. How various shots are combined in editing to create the impression of one scene happening, or what shot sizes and angles are used and why.

Discuss how to storyboard a film.

**Step 3.**
Storyboard and Shooting.

Have the group storyboard and shoot the short scene that they had devised, instructing one member to be a director.

**Step 4.**
Editing (done on Day 3).

Work with the groups to edit the pieces which they shot, pointing out what worked / could have been improved upon from an editing point of view.
Experiment with Shot Angles

Expressing Emotions:

Playing with Camera angles to capture that emotion:

Aims:
• To allow participants the time to discover the effects of different angles for themselves.
• To give participants practice in handling the camera and considering shot choices.
• To start to encourage participants to work as a creative team.

Instructions:

In a group of 3 - person A is the director, B the camera person and C the actor.

The group chooses an emotion - sadness, anger, happiness.

The director directs the actor into a pose to convey the emotion.

The camera person makes sure that the settings are all correct.

The director directs the camera person towards finding the most expressive camera angle to convey that emotion.

Rotate the roles, time allowing.
Interviewing Techniques

Demonstrate an interview:

Aims:
• To give an overview to participants of how to conduct a camera interview.
• To give participants practice in what it is like to be an interviewer/ interviewee.
• To teach best practice.

Instructions:

Explain the basics of documentaries and interview techniques including checking the eye-line and making the interviewee feel at ease.

The job of the interviewer is to help the interviewee feel at ease in front of the camera. One way to do this is to begin a conversation casually. The aim is to avoid a sense of “now we are starting to film”, which can change everyone’s behaviour and can make the interviewee uncomfortable.

The camera person begins rolling and taps the interviewers shoulder without saying anything.

The interviewer continues chatting with the interviewee without changing their attitude.

Teams and Roles

To learn how to shoot as a team.

Aims:
• To learn the various roles of film-making
• To learn best practice when film-making
• To work together clearly and efficiently
Instructions:

Step 1.

Create a demo team consisting of director, 2 actors, assistant director, camera person, sound person, boom operator, clapper.

Instruct the director to give the actors two simple lines to say.

Run through the format of shooting.

The director makes sure that the actors are ready.

The camera person makes sure that the settings and shot sizes are correct.

The sound person works with the camera person and boom operator to make sure that the microphone is as close as possible to the actors without being in shot and that the sound levels are good.

The clapper marks the scene and take on the clapper board.

Step 2.

As soon as everyone is ready the Assistant Director shouts “Silence on Set”

Assistant Director shouts “Camera”.

Camera person turns on record button and when the red light comes on shouts “Rolling”.

Assistant Director shouts “Sound”.
Choosing - Teams and Roles

To choose who wants what role on the films.

Aims:
• To choose a director / actors for the film.
• To give everyone a chance to perform the role they want to perform.

Instructions:

Step 1.

Go through the films to be made and ask for a show of hands as to who wants to be a director.

Specify that a director will not be an actor on the same film.

Also find out who wants to be an actor / camera person etc.

Notes:

Ideally there would only be one director for a film but it is possible to assign different scenes to different directors.

Step 2.

If more than one actor wants to go for the same role it is necessary to hold an audition.

Give actors a short scene to rehearse.

Have directors and other members of the team sit as an audience.

Invite actors in one at a time to demonstrate their piece. Directors can direct them to try it again or to try it in another way. Always thank the actor at the end of their performance.
After all of the actors have performed the rest of the team should discuss who their preferred candidate is.

Ask the team to invite the actors in and inform them of the their decision and the reasons for it.

Hold a forum where anyone can put up their hand to make a plea for a certain film saying why they think it should be made on the course.

Hand out pieces of paper and ask everyone to vote for the film that they would like to make.

Mark on the board how many votes each film got.

Plan to shoot the film with the most votes.
Pre-Production

To get everything in place for making the film.

**Aims**
- To storyboard and schedule the film.
- To get all the elements in place in order to shoot the film.
- To learn proper planning for a film.

**Instructions:**

**Storyboard / Shot List**

Get the team to work through the script making a list of shots for each scene and writing out a shot list and / or storyboard.

The director and writer should be involved in this process.

**Music and Sound Effects**

As they go through their shot list they should also make a list of what music or sound effects they might want for their movie and from where they will acquire them.

**Locations**

Get the team to confirm which location will be used for each scene - doing a reccie if necessary.

**Props and Costumes**

Get the team to assign one person to make a list of all of the props and costumes/ makeup needed for their film.

They should then make a note of who is going to bring in which props/ costumes.
Scheduling

Instruct the team to create a schedule of which shots to shoot when.

It is best to prioritise the first and last scenes while everyone has plenty of time and energy.

Scenes can be shot out of chronological order and it is best to schedule scenes that are in the same location consecutively.

It is important to know what is happening in a given location at a given time.

Script

Every member of the team should have access to a script during the shoot.
Shooting the film

Getting it all on film.

Aims:
• To apply all of the learning to date.
• To use best practice and collaborate well as a team.
• To create a short film.

Instructions:

Everyone should know what their role is and have access to a script.

Leaders should take a role as an adviser and stand back and allow the team to take charge only stepping in to advise when asked or when quality might be seriously compromised.

The team will:

Set up the scene and camera settings.
Rehearse the scene.
Shoot the scene.
The director should work with the actors, keeping in mind what shot angles to get. The camera person can help him/ her on this.
The leaders should be there on standby, only stepping in if their advice is needed.
The leaders should observe group dynamics and make sure that any roles which need to be rotated are rotated.
Notes:

During shooting, each leader took a role as adviser. Rather than coaching people on what is ‘right’, we aimed to intervene only when a mistake was being made.

Things to watch out for are director giving directions such as, “put your hand to your head and stand here”, rather than giving the actor their character’s situation and getting them to express it in a way that makes sense from the actor’s point of view.

To demonstrate emoting versus make-believe, you can connect camera to monitor and gave them an example of acting to camera with only a change in the actor’s thoughts. Natural acting on camera works best with subtlety, and this in turn relies on an actor’s ability to make-believe.

The crew can get impatient with the process of film-making, which by its nature takes repetition over the same scenes. Even though an actor might hit everything perfectly, there can be an error with sound, a problem with the focus or a multitude of other problems.

If participants are frustrated when something inevitably goes awry, it may be good to emphasise “keeping the focus”.

When shooting all members of the team need to stay in their roles and their positions while others get ready so that they are ready to shoot as soon as everyone is ready.

It’s useful to emphasised that repetition and error is a necessary part of the process and should be expected, especially with a new team who are getting used to new roles and interactions.
Editing the film

Checking the footage and putting it all together

**Aims:**
- To review footage to date and see what is and isn’t working.
- To assemble the footage into a story.
- To learn the technology and skills needed for editing.

**Instructions:**

Gather the team around to review the footage.

Assign one member to take notes as to which takes to keep and which ones to scrap.

Play through the footage, getting feedback from the team and ensuring that notes are taken.

Instruct the team in how to use the editing software.

Demonstrate how to assemble the first couple of pieces and then give each member a turn to edit the film with the others advising.

**Notes from the Pilot Workshop:**

Editing was popular and gave the participants a good sense of satisfaction and achievement.

Editing is a good time to point out shot choices and give further advice about shooting a film.

It is important for the team to watch the dailies at the end of every day.
Videolog

In-camera interviews for feedback on the course.

Aims:
• To provide a tool for participants to give feedback on the course.
• To enable reflection.

Instructions:

Introduce the concept of the video-log as a means of getting feedback from the participants about the course through individual interviews.

Ask the group what would be the best questions for the Video-log.

Write the questions up on the board and choose 3–5 most appropriate questions.

Each interviewee will answer the same basic questions, written on a piece of card, to camera.

Notes from the Pilot Workshop:

We did a peer shot videolog. There were mixed results for this. The interviewer naturally had an effect on the interviewee. On one or two occasions the interviewer was not sympathetic to the interviewee and threw the interviewee off course. At times the reverse happened and the interviewer drew out more information from the interviewee than would have otherwise been the case.

In order to have a consistent video-log it would be preferable to have a single interviewer that is not one of the leaders or to allow the participants to record the video-log on their own in a private booth.

Course leaders should choose from the following which method they think would work best for them.
Videolog as Private Booth

Set up a chair, microphone and camera in a separate space where the interviewee feels that they will not be overheard.

Ensure that the settings are correct.

The interviewee is instructed to enter the room, hit the record button, sit on the chair and then present themselves to camera, answering the questions given and adding any other information that they would like to give.

They should be given a time limit and a leader may knock on the door when their time is up.

The leader should check in with them as to how they got on in this exercise.

Videolog in Peer-Based Interview in Pairs

Have the camera, microphone and chair for interviewee set up in 2 different quiet rooms.

Prior to shooting the pair ensures that camera is rolling, the interviewee is in focus and the sound levels and white balance are good.

Interviewer is off-camera and helps the interviewer feel more at ease.

Interviewee is on-camera and looks to the interviewer during the recording.

They swap roles.

Videolog as Supervised Peer Based Interview
Have the camera, microphone and chair for interviewee set up in a different quiet room.

The leader should supervise three participants at a time, rotating their roles as interviewer, interviewee and camera person. Participants take turns in rotation to interview, be interviewed, and work the camera settings.

Camera person ensures that camera is rolling, the interviewee is in focus and the sound levels and white balance are good.

Interviewer is off-camera and helps the interviewer feel more at ease.

Interviewee is on-camera and looks to the interviewer during the recording.
Welcome & Group Rules

Welcome

Aims:
• To welcome everybody into the space.
• To get to know names and motivations for the course.
• To establish the group rules for the course.

Instructions:

Make sure that everyone, facilitators included, are seated in a large circle.

Introduce the facilitators, the space, house rules from the space and the basics of the course.

Establish the group rules by asking the group to brainstorm according to different headings: such as.

“What can ‘they’ do to make the course good?”
“What can the leaders do to make the course good?”

Write the rules onto a large sheet of paper and post it onto the wall for the remainder of the course.

Make a verbal contract to adhere to the rules.

Introduce yourselves as facilitators in more detail.

Ask everyone their names, experience and what they hope to achieve.
Round Up

Reviewing the week and saying goodbye.

**Aims:**
- To watch the films that have been made.
- To say goodbye and to give feedback
- To facilitate future communication between participants.

**Instructions:**

On the final day it is important to allow time for watching the films that have been made, for getting the group together, to review the learning and give everyone a chance to say their goodbyes and pass around contact details.

Set up editing stations for any final edits.