KID FILM LAB

A project of

Edith B. Ford Memorial Library

7169 N. Main St, Ovid NY 14521

Best Practices Guide
2015-2016

Contact Ford Memorial Library

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Materials

Materials were researched and ordered November, 2015. The project materials were selected under the guidance of filmmaker and artist Tyrone Brown-Osborne. Ease of use was taken into account, as well as the ability to achieve a high-quality result. Ithaca College professors and students were also consulted and offered suggestions.

A note: The material selection process was really difficult! For a person with little experience in film, there was a massive learning curve. Comparing seemingly identical items with widely varying price points, determining which cameras would fit our needs and understanding the materials needs for quality sound and lighting was challenging.

Seeking discounts: We ended up making 2 main carts through Amazon and B&H Photo Supplies. Both vendors allowed us to use our tax exempt status, and provided free shipping. Obtaining the tax exempt status was another hurdle that took a few extra steps, but saves us money in the long run.

Comments: After using the supplies, we found that we needed a higher end Canon to support an external mic. We didn't need the sandbags with the C-Stands, and found the shoulder mount too large for the kids. We would instead invest in a video tripod for smooth filming. We were glad to have the external hard drives, and wished we had invested in our own green screen as we consistently wanted to use it.

Additional Considerations

Be sure staff is familiar with all of the equipment. This allows the flexibility of having students informally use the equipment when staff can help troubleshoot.

Be sure to cultivate a love of editing in any student. Editing was the least favorite part for many of the participants and it is by far the most time consuming and tedious portion of filmmaking. Our IC instructors would take on the responsibility to edit for an hour or two after each session.

Try to use all one kind of computers. It would be recommended to have MAC computers, if possible, to run the editing software. We found difficulty transferring files from MAC to PC computers during the program.

Have someone with an attention to detail be in charge of downloading all footage recorded at the end of the day and place in well labeled files on an external hard drive. Do not skip this step. If possible, review all files at the end of the day and immediately rename to indicate excellent footage, good footage, and discarded footage. This will save time on the final day of editing.

Remember to take photos of participants during the program. We collected so much video, we forgot to photograph kids and adults working.

Sample Day

Day 1: Orientation with the cameras and idea building

10-3 PM—18 kids (7-12 years old)

10-10:15 – Getting Settled

    Meeting Kid Film Lab Instructors and Volunteers

    Getting Organized into Groups as organized by Shannon

10:15 -11:30 (Part 1)

    Ice-breakers (kids getting to know each other)

        Name Game

    Short Films - Fiction vs. Nonfiction

    Telling a Story through Film

        Characters, Setting, Plot

        Activities

        Charades

11:30-12   Lunch

12-1:15   Safety

    Camera Labeling

    Practicing Using Cameras

    Equipment Vocab (Types of Shots, Types of Angles)

    What would you do?

    Practicing Shots

1:15-30   Snack

1:30– 3 Script Practice

    Group Topics

    Brainstorming Ideas

    Storyboarding

    Pitching Ideas

Final Materials List:

Cameras:

2 GoPro Hero4 Silver/ 2 microSD cards

2 Canon Rebel T5 DSLR (include accessory kit with tripod & bag)

1 Canon Vixia

1 GoPro Accessory Kit, 1 GoPro bag, 2 extra GoPro batteries

1 Revo SR-1000 Shoulder Support Rig & Strap

Lights:

2 Lowel Tota-Light with bulb, 2 additional Ushio bulbs (lamps)

2 Gel frame for lights

2 sets of gels (front and blue)

2 Impact C-Stand with Sliding Leg, 4 Neewer Sandbag

Microphones:

2 Zoom H1 handheld recorder

2 Polsen OLM-10 Omnidirectional Lavalier Microphone

1 CAD handheld Dynamic Cardioid Microphone, 1 corresponding cord

Misc:

1 Pyle Pro Professional Megaphone, 6 batteries

3 Toshiba Canvio Connect 2TB harddrive

Spread the word

Recruitment is key to running a new library program. Classroom visits with props makes a huge impact on the students and follow up emails with teachers help to have them remind the students. We sent home flyers with students, had our program advertised on the school lunch menu and in parent newsletters. We promoted through other programs and recruited participants in that way.

To recruit children to participate in Kid Film Lab, the library presented to 4th and 5th grade classes at South Seneca and Romulus schools. Teachers were contacted by email to schedule short "show-and-tell" sessions with each targeted grade.

Half sheets were sent home to all students in the elementary schools detailing the upcoming program and developing name recognition. The logo was included on this flyer.

Because the program will span a number of months, and not all sessions have to be attended by each child, advertising will be ongoing. Students can attend as many or as few sessions as they like.

March 25, 26, 28th: Film Lab Focus Week facilitator: Ithaca College media students Focus: Animation. Students will learn how to use different animation techniques, including stop motion, green screens, flip books and more.

April 25-29th: Film Lab Focus Week facilitator: Tyrone Brown- Osborne (artist) Focus: Students will create and explore the community and learn about documentary film making under the tutelage of a professional filmmaker.

August: Library director will present to families with screening of projects created thus far. This may include experimental footage reels, finished projects, and sneak peeks of ongoing projects.

Ongoing: Establish a YouTube account for your organization. Update videos posted to the YouTube as they are created.

Sample Schedule

December 28, 29, 30th: Focus: Introduction to video. Kids will establish small groups of 2-4 people to work as a team on this project. The youth will be introduced to the use of handheld cameras as well as GoPros. They will create an ad for peers highlighting library activities, staff and events. The goal will be to learn how to use the cameras, and to work collaboratively. Library staff will participate as small group leaders to develop technical skills with the equipment.

2nd and 4th Saturday of each month: The Lab is open and staffed by our Teen Assistant and budding filmmaker, Jenna. From 10am- 2pm students can drop in and experiment with the equipment including borrowing cameras to film in and around the library. In later months they will be able to use the editing software as well. (Jan. 9, 23; Feb. 13, 27; March 12, 26; April 9, 23)

Feb. 12, 13, 15, 16th: Film Lab Focus Week facilitator: Ithaca College media students Focus: Framing a shot and audio recording. Students will experiment with camera angles and work with scripted and unscripted filming with local community members. Experimentation will be encouraged!

Identifying Partners

Contact local organizations for volunteers:

The biggest key to success for KFL was recruiting from the Ithaca College Media Students. Library staff sent an email to every media professor at both Ithaca College and Cornell University. A handful of students replied to our queries and a few followed through and actually participated. We provided stipend money to cover the cost of traveling and our IC assistants plan to use this experience on their resume. One student in particular was interested in taking on a leadership role, and will be completing a special project while participating in Kid Film Lab (KFL) as a teacher. The IC students provided the expertise in filmmaking and they served as an excellent role model for our students.

Seek professionals:

We met with professional filmmaker Tyrone Brown-Osborne to discuss a plan of action, and to ensure that the right materials were purchased. He will teach a portion of the program in a week-long movie making session at the end of the project.

Share with others:

Local schools of South Seneca and Romulus NY are helping to raise awareness of the program and garner excitement from students.

The Finger Lakes Library System will allow Ford Library staff to present the Kid Film Lab project and train other library staff how to utilize a film lab within their own libraries.

Community Involvement

Local Businesses

Having kids learn more about the businesses located in their community as well as the history can lead to a much stronger sense of community. On the days our KFL teams were walking around our village interviewing the bank manager and a local shop owner, other folks were commenting on the excitement of seeing the film crew. People began to talk about what the kids were up to and many people stopped to say how happy they were that kids were taking an interest in the history of the village.

Local Historian

Our local historian was most pleased to share knowledge with the kids. She was happy to chat with them and see what they were up to.

Local Expertise

Another use of community members was to find a former media professor who provided guidance for the program. She was a guest instructor for a day. Finding local expertise was an unexpected positive result of the program.

Scheduling

We scheduled our KFL projects during school breaks, which allowed for maximum participation. Some of the school breaks were 5 days, others just 2. We created our program around the days the students had off of school.

Drop-in sessions were held every other Saturday when we could pay to have our teen advisor on hand to assist students.

Drop In Sessions

These are fantastic to have kids explore using the equipment, however someone must be present to be the overseer of the session to avoid having kids running wild with cameras. The Director had suggested kids make a video card or message for a loved one and one group did take this idea and run with it. Some kids just wanted to play with the cameras, for instance the Go Pro's, and some wanted to complete an entire fictional short This is where our teen assistant, with a love of editing, was most influential.

It would be a good idea to have a grab bag of ideas to use in a drop-in session. Students could select a topic at random (for instance, create a puppet show about opposites or create a commercial about an author) and work from that. Or, one day could be all green screen shots and what we can do in the editing phase with them.