**AND INSET DAY 10th Dec 2015**

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Top Tips

#### The 4 Cs

**Camera checks (aka always test!):**

* Is the battery full or nearly so?
* Is it recording?
* Is it too bright/too dark/backlit
* Can you hear sound?

### Composition

* Eyelines law of thirds for faces

**Continuity**

* For both narrative and documentary

**Communication**

* On set etiquette
* Interview techniques

# **Intro to camera:**

# Ride the horse in the direction it’s going

It’s wise to work with what you have and make that part of your creative and stylistic approach. Working with the creative input, enthusiasm and natural talent of the staff and students is likely to give you more innovative results.

# Sound quality is important (and often overlooked)

Most phones and tablets have the ability to record fairly good footage and many brands have really good lenses. What generally lowers the the quality is the audio. An inexpensive external microphone could be a good investment

**Before starting:**

# **Focus**

If the subject matter moves the camera will shift focus. Script or direct to minimize this.

# **Portrait or landscape**

Choose one or the other and stick with it…jumping between them makes for an odd film (and not in a good way).

**Lighting**

Avoid back-lighting unless it’s deliberate. Also check that you have enough light for images to be clear and crisp.

# **Hand-held perils**

Wobbles look worse on a bigger screen. A little camera is handy if you want to be discreet (fly on the wall) and can be useful with kids to avoid the inevitable jumping in front of the camera. A tripod can be an inexpensive best friend in filming.

**Technique**

Interviews

* Considering shooting from alternating sides
* Consider changing the shot size, i.e., close-up v closer-up or pulling back
* A variety of angles can add dimension to your footage, e.g., changing the POV (point of view) from child to adult.

# Etiquette

* Make the person in front of the camera feel comfortable
* Nod in agreement when they’re speaking, as encouragement that they’re doing a good job
* Don’t speak over them
* Get them to put your question in their answer. Example: ‘When did you know you wanted to be a musician?’ ‘I knew I wanted to be a musician when…’

Other tips

* **Try to limit how much you shoot: it’ll make editing easier. But don’t cut so soon that you miss out on essential images.**
* **Contextualise your footage with cutaways, i.e., scenes that relate to the primary subject (for instance: a film about a musician might have cutaways to a studio or concert setting)**
* **Voiceover means you can record audio at a later date in a controlled environment. Don’t use voiceover and titles at the same time: people end up not taking in either. You can alternate throughout the film but not at the same time.**
* Don’t panic if something is happening off screen that you want to film. Panning slowly will produce a professional sequence of images. You often hear someone off screen before you see them in professional docs.

**Filming with young people**

**Logistics**

A common issue with video is resources: if you have 1 tablet and 30 kids you need to structure your filming to be manageable, inclusive and valuable. You could do this by:

# **Splitting into groups. If you’re making a narrative you might split the class into 3 groups and give them the beginning, middle and end to work on, then within their group of 10 you might break them into further groups like a film crew:**

Art dept (make-up, costumes, props)

Camera team

## Sound recording team

Set design and build team

* Rotation. Another way of working is to have stations set up around the room which the students rotate around, for example:
  + Sound station with sound equipment or camera used for recording sound
  + Camera station with camera perhaps already set up on a tripod where they can take turns to record a short section each or say a piece to camera.
  + Computer area where they can make graphics or simple animations to add to their video
  + Music station where they can record simple background rhythms

**If different people are taking the camera off to film give them some creative rules to stick to create some cohesion, e.g.**

* Always pan left at the start and right at the end
* Always keep the shot size the same
* You have to have something blue in the shot

# Tips on set etiquette and protocols

* Invest in a clapper board: they have an amazing effect on the room and students generally respond very well to them and understand that once the board has clapped we are filming and silence is necessary.
* Here’s a template for starting to film:
  + Clapper loader is in charge of writing on the clapper board which shot/take it is
  + Director says, “Quiet for rehearsal/quiet on set/quiet for a take”
  + Director says, “Roll camera”
  + Camera operator presses record and says “camera rolling”
  + Clapper loader claps board in front of camera and calls the Shot and Take. A ‘shot’ is an attempt to film a particular scene; a ‘take’ is which time you’re making the attempt. For instance: ‘Shot 3, Take 1.’
  + Filming takes place
  + Director calls “cut”
  + Operator lets camera roll a little before switching off (important for editing)

# **Exercise to establish and play with some filmmaking techniques**

1. Interviews off camera:ask each otherabout school life. 2 mins each. Make it funny or interesting, the best and worst of school life, your strengths/weaknesses, your greatest aspirations/fears for yourself or your school.
2. Next, the other person relays what you said to camera in an interview. So you are essentially interviewing the other person about yourself. (10 mins)
3. Cutaways – establishing shots, close-ups of hands, eyes, etc.; significant places in school…things that contextualise. Be creative: shoot things that you might want to speed up or slow down or imagine a series of jump cuts – picture the final film and try to capture what you’ll need to make it.
4. Film the interviewee in situ – fly on the wall style observational camera work.