

The Activity

The class divides into pairs. Using a reel-to-reel audio tape recorder, the pairs interview each other for about three minutes. With sound splicing blocks and audio-splicing tape, each student edits the interview he conducted with his partner down to sixty seconds. By listening to the edited audiotapes, the pairs decide what sequence of between five and ten "shots" would be the best visual materials for the soundtrack. A fairly tight plan is developed. Storyboards or shooting-scripts can be used here. Finally, the tape is shot, in finished sequence, to the exact length of the audio tape. Titles can be added to the head or tail of the tape. Using patch cords, the audio-materials is audio-dubbed onto the tape. Presentations and evaluations with the whole class follows.

Teaching Suggestions

This activity calls upon a tight ration of equipment per student and hence might be carried out over a long period of time. Suggest arranging pairs so that

kids work with someone they don't know too well. Younger kids may have trouble editing the sound – so you might have them pre-plan questions, turn off the recorder during questions and delivery, have the interviewer write a script for the interviewee after discussions (and vice-a-versa) or structure combinations of these. Using a tripod will "break" the natural rush to shoot tape and make kids plan more carefully. Disallowing any camera-movement during the shooting will "break" things further. Have kids to three or four takes of the 60 second sequence and choose the best one.

Variations and Follow-Up

Exchange a series of portraits with kids in another area; do portraits of family members; have kids do video first and audio second; discuss how close interviews come to "real" life; have kids reflect on demands placed on them both as videomakers and as subjects of the videotape; audio-dub with a mike (not patch cord) and add music from a record; try putting one person's soundtrack on another's visual portrait.

Theater Gaming

GERRY LAYBOURNE

Theater Games, originated by Viola Spolin, provide a non-threatening way for people to begin acting in front of the camera. Each game is organized around a Point of Concentration (POC) which helps to break acting into familiar, simple segments. Immediately, the participant is given something to do. Another Spolin term used in the descriptions below, Side Coaching, is the leader's methods for keeping the group focused on the POC. The first four games come from Spolin's *Improvisations for the Theater*, the last four from workshop experience.

The Activity

This activity requires a large, open, unobstructed space. Have the equipment assembled. Give one group member basic operating instructions. Ask others to relieve the camera man as the spirit moves them, but to try to do some taping. Each new camera man is given instructions from the previous one. It is important, especially with small children,



Milo Dalbey

to stop taping after several activities and play back the tape. This seems to reduce anxieties about seeing oneself and helps to get people involved more in acting.

1) Body Monitoring Pretest: Let your group sit for several minutes with no instructions, then have them stand and place themselves in space. POC: self feeling self. Side Coaching: concentrate on how your body feels. How do your shoulders feel? If they feel heavy, make them heavier. If they feel light, make them lighter. Think about your calves. your stomach. .your arms. .etc.

2) Play Ball: Participants should arrange themselves in a circle. Have the group decide the size of the ball they will use to play ball. POC: weight, size, speed of ball. Side Coaching: The ball is very heavy. Now make the ball very light. The ball is the same weight that it was in the beginning. The ball is very fast. Now it is very slow.

3) Tug-of-War: If you are working with young

children, you will have to spend some time discussing what a tug of war entails before you divide into teams. Although they will know what one is, it is not part of their everyday vocabulary of images. Count off by twos and divide into two teams. POC: the texture and tension of the rope. Side Coaching: Feel the rope. Feel its texture. TUG! Feel the rope burn your hands.

4) Mirrors: Have each person locate a partner. A faces B. A acts as the mirror while B initiates action. You may suggest simple activities like brushing hair or dressing. After several minutes have them switch roles. As the activity progresses, have them switch more frequently so that by the end it is difficult to know which is the mirror.. POC: mirroring the initiator's movement. Side Coaching: Follow the movements exactly. Try to move slowly and smoothly. Keep your actions exact. Be a mirror.

5) Dictionary of Feelings: Have the group position itself in space. Ask everyone to close his eyes. Begin by asking them to imagine that they are trees, then get more specific. . . a tree on a cold, windy winter day. . . a young tree on a bright spring morning. . . a tree about to be chopped down. . . an old, craggy tree. After they warm up, tell the group a story, appropriate to them, involving emotions. For example: You are on your way to school on Monday morning and you drop your spelling book in a puddle. When you arrive at school and tell your teacher, she tells you not to worry. Then you discover that your best friend has just returned after being absent for two weeks...etc. POC: acting out feelings. Side Coaching: Show me how you would feel. Concentrate on what you are feeling. How would your face look? How would your body look?

6) Long Distance Touching: Group stands in a

circle. Each member touches his opposite. Ask them to take one step backward, then another and another until they are at opposite ends of the room. POC: focus between paired members. Side Coaching: Concentrate on your opposite. Try to maintain contact. Stretch. Feel the bond between you.

7) The MTA: Have the group line up in triple file. They should push together as tightly as possible, on all sides. Have them close their eyes and slowly and carefully lead them around the room. POC: contact and group motion. Side Coaching: Keep pressed together. Feel the motion. Listen to the motion.

8) Making a Machine: Explain that the group will make a machine together. You may want to have the group decide before hand what kind of machine they will make or you may want to build an abstract machine. Have one person begin the motion and have others join in when they want to. The machine should have sound as well as motion. POC: machine rhythm. Side Coaching: The machine is getting louder. The machine is getting faster. Now it is slowing down. It is breaking down.

Teaching Suggestions

With modifications, Theater Games are appropriate for any kind of group. I used these activities with my class of high school seniors who in turn used them with children they were teaching in nursery, elementary and junior high school. In all age groups the games seemed to ease the problem of not knowing what to do or say in front of the camera. During the playback sessions we found it better to let the audience enjoy themselves rather than correcting acting styles. We were more concerned that their first experience with video be positive rather than instructive.

Music, Movement and Video

PETER HARATONIK

This activity is designed to integrate the understanding of music and its relation to movement through the use of video. Too often kids are taught music or dance through the "appreciation" approach where they are exposed to the art through



Mary Sheridan

example, a symphony by Beethoven, a ballet with Nureyev, a performance by the New York Philharmonic. What is often neglected is a way of providing understanding of the art in general; why do people create music, what do movements in dance