

Project Evaluation: The Mischief Makers / November 2008

Location & Duration

Stobhill Hospital, MacKinnon House, Lifeskills Department
5 week project, 2 session per week, 2h 30min each plus final screening

Project outline

Participants are given the opportunity to engage in a clay animation workshop. This includes sculpting characters, story developing, scrip writing, filming the animation and sound recording. The footage was edited and a final screening with snacks and drinks was held at the MacKinnon house. Family, friends and other patients were invited to celebrate the success.

At the beginning of the project the group were all very quiet and needed a lot of encouragement to create their characters, there wasn't a lot of conversation around the table the first few sessions and as we tried to engage the group in discussing, story lines and ideas would be offered tentatively and slowly. When the characters were near completion the group became a little more open and talkative, it was clear they were proud of their achievement in modelling the characters and that they were engaged with the idea of their creations being in a film.

We dedicated a whole session to script writing, this is often the hardest part of the process for groups of people who lack confidence because it requires that people speak about what they think should happen, talk about other peoples ideas and have people talk about their own. The script writing session was slow, nobody wanted to be the first to contribute, we would gently suggest ideas and try and engage the group in discussion, eventually a couple of people contributed to the script which gave some courage to others until everyone in the group had at least one bit of input to the script at the end of the session.

When we came to filming the animation the group picked up the technique really quickly. Often it will take a couple of sessions before everyone has a good grasp of how animation works. Over the course of the filming sessions the group really took command of the process, communication is a vital part of filming, the person on camera has to tell the animators when they are taking a picture and when it is safe to begin moving the characters again they also have to give information about what the camera is seeing, although the participants remained shy, the structure and specific language of filming allow for a beginning in confident communication, as the weeks went on the conversation within the group, particularly at the tea breaks, began to increase.

The final part of the process was the vocal recording, in a professional environment vocal recordings are done before filming to allow the animators to synchronise the lip movements of the characters to the voices, we do this at the end because the participants will be more confident in the group and more likely to give their best performance. On the day of recording the participants were indeed confident and were relaxed enough to share in laughing at each others funny voices and giving each other lots of encouragement and applause after each recording.

Project outcomes

- Increase in confidence
- Increase in self-esteem
- Encourage interaction between other people
- Develop new skills

Project indicators

- Confidence (putting forward ideas, using initiative, constructive criticism)
- Self-esteem (being part of a team, being creative and seeing the end result)
- Develop skills (learning about equipment, technologies and methodologies involved in the process)
- Interaction (level of engagement with workshop facilitators and other members of the group)

Feedback (Stobhill Staff)

"All the participants are now keen to embrace new ideas and suggestions and I believe are already missing their sessions with Theatre Nemo. On a positive note it has encouraged staff to think outside of the box with regard to developing the program of activities within the art room."

"Theatre Nemo has a positive impact on patients with mental health issues, it assists them in their recovery."

"I only hope that the New Year brings further sessions from Theatre Nemo to the Lifeskills unit."

"Once again, Theatre nemo have provided a wonderful, productive and thoroughly worthwhile project. I think the relaxed nature of the workshop facilitators added to the enjoyment. The department was buzzing for days afterwards!"