S H O R T   F I L M   P R O J E C T

Procedure Manual

This booklet contains the protocols and forms to successfully engage the English Short Film Project during the 2018-2019 school year.

FROEBEL BILINGUAL SCHOOL, INC.

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FOREWORD

Eleven years ago, a group of students approached me regarding the evaluation of a drama unit in the Elements of Literature course they were taking. The evaluation of the play we engaged in the course would consist of preparing and executing the best reenactment possible of the particular act assigned to each team in the class. That meant they would be responsible for dressing a set, preparing costumes, acquiring props, blocking, lighting, acting, etc… Unknown to those students, they would be making a proposition that would change our school forever. They begged to be allowed to turn in DVD of their work, instead of performing in front of a live audience. "We wanna do a movie", they said. Not quite sure I'd heard correctly, I asked what they meant. They reiterated their desire to create a film without batting an eyelash. Cold self assuredness in young people always melts my heart.

Not being the kind of person that likes to get in the way of creative self expression, I allowed them to proceed after the students reassured me that the endeavor would be worth our while (after some very dissuasive and stern warnings). In my heart of hearts, however, I rooted for their success. The kids turned in their DVDs few weeks later. They were – not very good, cinematically speaking. They lacked the proper tools and the training one associates with the seventh art. They had more in common with the gag or blooper reels that we find in DVD extra features than with the feature films we're accustomed to. However, they had a *je ne sais quoi*; they had a charming quality to them, a passion, a… joy? The kids were so darn proud of what they had produced and shared with all of us. How can an educator not see potential in something like that, be moved by it?

Up to that moment, I had never witnessed such level of self satisfaction and bonding in a group of students. Not after a test, not after a book report, not after an oral presentation. I think that it came from the cost. What they did, cost them a lot more than just cramming dates into their heads for a test or typing a report until their fingertips went numb. I also think that it came from the team effort experience. Working with others towards the achievement of a common goal is a wonderful way to live life. So, what do you do with an experience like this one? Take it to the next level. We've been taking it to the next level every year since. From eighth grade to twelfth, literature students and writing students create cinema; that is, share narratives that were formed with textual language and transform them into a visual experience.

So, dear student where does that place you? Simple. In a good place. You'll collaborate with peers. You'll learn to be a vital part of a team effort. You'll learn to communicate visually by learning a whole new language. You'll learn that the needs of the many outweigh the need of the one. You'll learn to triage. You'll learn the terrible price of procrastination. You'll learn that everything we do or don't, matters. You'll learn that one must finish what one begins. You'll learn that (as a general rule,) what you put into something is what you get back. Cause and effect. Action and reaction. You'll learn the most important life lessons a person can learn. That's why we have and will continue this journey, which began with a few bold students that were not afraid to take risks and be different.

Jim Soto

INTRODUCTION

We live in a multimedia world. Some forms of literacy all people need to develop include: textual, numerical, visual, audio, and multimedia. We live in times where we are increasingly moving farther away from textual communication. Unfortunately, people get less information from reading nowadays and get more from visual sources. There is and has always been a need for efficient textual literacy and communication, however, the prevalence and impact of visual communication in contemporary society is irrefutable.

Visual Literacy is the ability to understand and produce visual messages. Not mastering visual literacy could make a 21st century individual vulnerable and also irrelevant. In today's world it is vital to develop the ability to create, use, and evaluate visual resources.

Research demonstrates that a mastery of visual literacy is highly beneficial for the constructing and deconstructing written texts. In other words, visual literacy enhances textual literacy skills such as "visualization"--a key to proficiency in the enjoyment of reading.

The Short Film Project allows students to engage the creative process in a way no other middle/high school literature and writing courses projects have been able to. Students have the opportunity to collaborate with a group of peers in adapting a work of literature of their choice into a short film. Some, like the Writing students, have the opportunity to film their own screenplays. It is important that students and parents understand that, although many of the skills and processes used in this project are taught in the elective cinematography course, this project is and has always been part of the middle / high school English curriculum.

The skills developed during this project and the experiences students undergo are useful in many other areas and stages of life. Whether a student's interest lay in the artistic arena or in more technical endeavors, this project is a great learning experience. This project is not only a creative outlet, but is also highly problem-solving oriented. A variety of filmmaking opportunities will be available to allow students full expression of their technical skills and artistic sensibilities. Although the process is collaborative, the students will also be graded for their individual contributions to the film.

The final product will be the result of choices made by the students, which is why any resources and materials to be used in its realization fall under the students' purview. All projects should be approached as *low* to *no* budget films. Students should creatively use available resources such as: equipment, props and costumes; ensuring they add production value to the project. If available, the school can allow our students borrow some of the tools required for the task. Any student interested in borrowing equipment must complete a request form from the Cinematography teacher and take full responsibility for replacing any equipment lost or damaged while under his care.

PARENTAL COLLABORATION

God saw it fit to equip our students with parents. Since all our students are minors and most require transportation and food as essential parts of the project's workflow, parents should partner up with their children to enable and assist them during the principal photography phase of the project. Because of the nature of the project, some parts of it need to be worked upon after school hours. For the process to be as smooth as possible, students and parents must engage in conversation regarding the liberation of as much time as possible during February. This month is critical because here is when Principal Photography takes place.

It is vital for the project's success that a realistic schedule be produced and that students and parents faithfully commit to it. As a sign of courtesy and respect towards others, everybody should be at the accorded locations on time and refrain from activities that do not help move the project towards its completion. Here parents can help round up students that get sidetracked by "distractions" and steer them towards reaching the established goals of the day. Students are expected to be focused on their specific tasks when shooting their films. It is important that all parties remember that respect and courtesy should always be articulated while at private locations and disruptions of any kind must be avoided or minimized at the very least.

In the case of the younger students, parents must be aware that any time in which students "get together" outside school hours, should be used to shoot the project as per the Shooting Schedule. For example: having meetings at Burger King to "talk" seems like a crass waste of time. There's plenty of time at school to have team meetings to discuss the project.

STAGES

A reasonable amount of time will be provided for each stage, partially under the teacher's supervision. Each group will be divided into teams where the student themselves will determine, with the help of the team leader and the consensus of the team, the various roles they will assume during the film's production. The project is divided into five (5) stages. These are:

Development	During the last week of October, students will hold a discussion with the teacher regarding their particular approach to the school year's theme and the story they'll be developing or adapting. Here is where task distribution and scripting should begin. A ½" binder will be build and maintain detailing the project's development (check the *EVALUATION FORMS LIST* and *PROJECT DOCUMENTS* section for more details). Students must at least assume two roles according to their skills/interests. The scouting of potential shooting locations and the identification of the assets that will be needed should be considered during this stage.
Pre-production	From the last week of January to the first week of February, students should be actively preparing for Principal Photography. A detailed Shooting Schedule that has been agreed upon by all parties must be furnished to the teacher before shooting begins.
Production / Principal Photography	During February, students will engage Principal Photography. Shooting outings should be carefully planned before arriving to the locations to ensure quick and efficient filming. The safety of the cast and the crew, with a good measure of common sense must always prevail. Locations should be treated respectfully and once used should be left unsullied.
Post-production	During the last week of February, if not earlier, students should be editing and compositing their projects. Editing at a later date is usually the result of poor planning and organization. The typical result is a film of poor quality. Experience has taught us that it's always in the student's best interest to follow the teacher's recommendations regarding the various softwares and online resources used during this stage.
Distribution	During the second week of March, students will turn in their films for evaluation. The project will be delivered in a flash drive in any of the following video formats: mp4 (**MPEG** 4) or MKV (**Matroska**).

It should be noticed that even if you give students enough time to complete a task, procrastinators will still find the amount of time given insufficient. Froebel Bilingual School, when compared with other schools, has earned a reputation for being very respectful of students' time. That is why any claim of having insufficient time for this project will be considered baseless. To be successful in this project, students have to learn to be responsible stewards of their time. Procrastination is your enemy!

This project is the single most important English course project of the year, that's why it has a value of 200 points. It is usually due the first week of March. Exact dates for this year can be found in page 7. Late work will be penalized with a -20 point deduction for each day for each student.

The short film's length will be 10 minutes (including the credits). Projects shorter than 9 or longer than 12 minutes will not be accepted. For those with more experience* producing cinema, at least two (2) VFX and/or makeup FX are expected in each film.

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*10th grade through 12th grade

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Students will earn points for:

- Level of organization as reflected in the shooting schedule
- Group dynamics
- Commitment to their team's effort
- Skill level as reflected in the final product
- Level of responsibility as reflected in the logs
- Faithfulness to the source material (reflecting comprehension)
- Level of excellence and artistry in putting the product together (reflected in the final product)
- Quality of the screenplay (only when applicable)

DOs AND DON'Ts

There will be things you'll be allowed to do with your project, and others you won't. Thread carefully.

You can…

- Begin building a folder of assets (sound clips, music, overlays, etc…), in your computer, that will later be used during post to edit the coverage.
- Visit the websites recommended by the teacher and acquire free assets available for filmmakers to elevate your projects.
- Use non-team members as part of your cast, as long as it's a very small role.
- Help other teammates, as long as you're not neglecting your responsibilities (even if you don't get credit for it).
- Be thrifty and imaginative by recycling used materials or items as costumes and/or props.
- Make sure shooting locations are left as clean and undisturbed as they were found.
- Use ADR and find free online sound audio assets to clean up, replace, and build up the audio in your film. Bad audio is unforgivable!
- Attend a free editing refresher workshop to be given by the Cinematography teacher at a date yet to be announced.

You cannot…

- Develop a project that has not been preapproved by the teacher.
- Begin Principal Photography without a shooting schedule that has been certified by all team members.
- Cast non-members in important roles or crew positions.
- Cast in a manner that is inconsistent with the appropriate age of the character.
- Allow O.M.O.s* (One Man Orchestras) in your teams. Over achievers must get a grip and remember that the process is supposed to be collaborative and inclusive.
- Be absent to classes to shoot your project.
- Present content that could be rated R or above by the Motion Picture Association of America. Watch it! Sometimes less is more.
- Turn in films with bad audio. Audio must be as clear as possible.
- Turn in films without the appropriate final credits.
- While a blooper reel is not requested, nor will it be part of the projects evaluation, if turned in by the students, it must be separate from the film project.
- Pay to have any part of your project completed by third parties.

EVALUATION FORMS LIST

A total of three (4) different evaluation forms will be used to evaluate each student. Those will be:

1. The **Shooting Schedule** that has been agreed upon by all parties and that contains all preproduction material must be furnished to the teacher before shooting begins. This will be turned over by the team leaders during the pre-production stage, which is Jan. 21, 2019. (10% of grade)

2. The **Individual Student Work Log** sheet to monitor daily pre-production work. This will be turned over by the team leaders after the pre-production stage, which is Feb. 11, 2019. (10% of grade)

3. The **Production Task Log** for monitoring production work of individual team members. It will be turned in by the team leaders no later than March 1, 2019. (10% of grade)

4. A ½" **Project Binder**, which contains the *Film Development Package** of documents and evidences the evolution of the project through the first 3 stages of the filmmaking process, must be turned in on the film's due day, which is March 8, 2019. (30% of grade)

5. The **Short Film Rubric** to evaluate the film. This sheet will be completed by the teacher on the film's due day, which March 8, 2019. (40% of grade)

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*Includes the following: [1]Copy of the latest version of the script, [2]additional copy of shooting schedule, [3]list of all locations used during Principal Photography, [4]story board (2 sheets minimum), [5]costume and set design (2 sheets minimum for each), [6]list of cast/ crew members, [7]production photo (1 photograph), and [8]Movie poster as cover of the binder. The Film Development Package will be made available in your English teacher's website.

APPENDIX

A. NIGHT OWL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Our school celebrates an annual short film festival where the best projects of the year are exhibited and student excellence in different categories is rewarded. **For all middle and high school students, attendance and support of the activity, in order to earn points for the Film Festival Attendance & Support grade, is compulsory**. This event usually takes place early in April. After the short film projects are graded they are turned over to a panel of 5 or 7 judges, to evaluate the films. The panel then selects nominees for each category through their votes. The nominees with most votes are then chosen as the winners and are kept secret until the ceremony. At the event, the five highest scored films are exhibited, since it would be impossible to show all projects in one evening.

At the event, which is open to the community, nominees enjoy a red carpet interview and then sit at a VIP area, where they enjoy the best view and easy access to the stage where the awards are given to the winners in each category.

The exhibited films are eventually uploaded to our curated YouTube channel to showcase the school's program and our student's achievements in the cinematic arts.

B. CINEMATOGRAPHY CLUB

Exists to promote and advance the art and science of cinematography and bringing students with an interest in cinematography together to exchange ideas, discuss techniques and produce motion pictures as a vehicle of artistic self-expression. Additionally, the club will provide opportunities outside of the classroom and school hours for those interested in a variety of film projects. It is also the purpose of the club to experience the atmosphere and work of film festivals.

C. PROJECT DOCUMENTS

FROEBEL
FRIEDRICH FROEBEL BILINGUAL SCHOOL
CELEBRATING 11 YEARS OF FILMMAKING! (2009 – 2019)

RUBRIC FILM DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE

TEAM	DATE

CHECK	CRITERIA
	MOVIE POSTER AS COVER OF THE BINDER
	COPY OF THE LATEST VERSION OF THE SCRIPT
	ADDITIONAL COPY OF SHOOTING SCHEDULE
	LIST OF ALL LOCATIONS USED DURING PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY
	STORY BOARD (2 SHEETS MINIMUM)
	COSTUME AND SET DESIGN (2 SHEETS MINIMUM FOR EACH)
	DETAILED LIST OF CAST/ CREW MEMBERS
	PRODUCTION PHOTO (1 PHOTOGRAPH)
	DETAILED LIST OF CAST/ CREW MEMBERS
	PRODUCTION PHOTO (1 PHOTOGRAPH)
	TOTAL SCORE OBTAINED BY THE STUDENT:

COMMENTS: _____

SHOOTING SCHEDULE
Production Title

PRODUCER: _____   FILM SHOOT –   DAYS
DIRECTOR: _____   DATES:
WRITER: _____
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: _____

DATE	SET/SCENES	CAST	LOCATION

END OF _____ DAY   TOTAL PAGES:

FILM PRODUCTION TASK LOG

FOR MONITORING WORK OF INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS

FILM TITLE -   DATE -   /   /

TEAM LEADER -

IN THE SPACES BELOW PROVIDE A BRIEF EXPLANATION ABOUT SPECIFIC TEAM MEMBER'S PERFORMANCE FOR THE SHOOTING DATE. BE AS FACTUAL AS NECESSARY. EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVES. NEGATIVES IF STRICTLY NECESSARY.

TEAM MEMBER #1 –

TEAM MEMBER #2 -

TEAM MEMBER #3 -

TEAM MEMBER #4 -

TEAM MEMBER #5 –

TEAM MEMBER #6 –

SHOOTING DAY # ___

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT WORK LOG SHEET

STUDENT NAME/POSITION	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					

LEGEND: √ **- Fulfilled responsibilities**   ♡ **- Helped other peers**

Ø **– Did nothing/Wasted time**

≠ **- Was not prepared**

R UBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF THE BOOK TO FILM PROJECT

Title: _____

Student: _____   **Date:** _____

Category	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Score
Screenplay (Organization – Story)	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains a clear focus throughout. 10	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains focus for most of the film. 8	There are a few lapses in focus, but the purpose is fairly clear. 6	It is difficult to figure out the narrative. 4	
Cinematography (Clips / Images)	Images create a distinct atmosphere or tone that matches different parts of the story. The images may communicate symbolism and / or metaphors. 10	Images create an atmosphere or tone that matches some parts of the story. The images may communicate symbolism and / or metaphors. 8	An attempt was made to use images to create an atmosphere / tone but it needed more work. Image choice is logical. 6	Little or no attempt to use images to create an appropriate atmosphere/tone. 4	
Sound / Audio Track	Important sounds and dialogue were captured. Every attempt was made to anticipate and filter out unwanted noise in the recording. Music stirs emotions that match the story line well. 10	Important sounds and dialogue were captured. Music stirs a rich emotional response that somewhat matches the story line. 8	Dialogue captured lacks good quality. Music is ok, and not distracting, but it does not add much to the story. 6	Little attention was paid to ensure quality sound during the shoot. Music is distracting, inappropriate, OR was not used. 4	
Editing	Story is told with exactly the right amount of detail throughout. Film is long enough to say what it has to. 10	The story composition is typically good, though it seems to drag somewhat OR need slightly more detail in one or two sections. 8	The story needs more editing. It is noticeably too long or too short in more than one section. 6	The story needs extensive editing. It is too long or too short to be interesting. 4	
Production Design (Binder/Props & costumes)	Film & binder show excellent effort was made to include costumes +/or props which help make the film more realistic. 10	Film & binder show good effort was made to include +/or props which help make the film more realistic. 8	Film & binder show noticeable effort was made to include costumes +/or props which help make the film more realistic. 6	Film & binder show little to no effort made to include costumes +/or props which help make the film more realistic. 4	
Originality	Movie shows considerable originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in a unique and interesting way. 10	Movie shows some originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in an interesting way. 8	Movie shows an attempt at originality and inventiveness in part of the presentation. 6	Movie is a rehash of other people's ideas and/or images and shows very little originality. 4	
Performances	High level of expertise was evident in student's area of responsibility. Connected with audience because ability displayed is aesthetic, exciting, and engaging. 15	Expertise was evident in student's area of responsibility. Connected with audience because ability displayed is aesthetic, exciting, and engaging. 12	A level of skill was evident in student's area of responsibility. Occasionally connected with audience because ability displayed is aesthetic, exciting, and engaging. 10	Little to no expertise was shown in student's area of responsibility. Didn't connect with audience for inability to display is aesthetic, exciting, and engaging. 7	
Responsibility	Student supported the team's efforts during filming by being prepared, cooperative and on time. 25	Student supported the team's efforts during filming by being mostly prepared and on time. 20	Student displayed some support the team's efforts during filming by being mostly prepared and on time. 15	Student displayed little support for the team's efforts during filming by arriving unprepared and late or being absent. 10	