Christina Etherington   Active Learning Examples

## Activity One (Creative Writing)
Writing a Log Line

A l**ogline** is a two sentence description that boils the script down to its essential dramatic narrative in as succinct a manner as possible.

A short video from YouTube is assigned as "homework" and introduces the students to the new term. The next class day a brief lecture is given that further explains the term and displays examples of different kinds of loglines. Students will be given an example and a formula to help write a logline in a handout. Student will pick a movie, write a logline for that movie, and then see if the rest of the class can guess which movie they have chosen.

Example, this logline would be presented and the students raise hand as soon as they know the movie.

> *An overprotective father watches helplessly as his son is taken captive; and without hesitation begins a journey into uncharted waters to rescue him. With a very forgetful companion along for the swim, they overcome many obstacles and the father finally learns to take risks and trust others, including his son.*
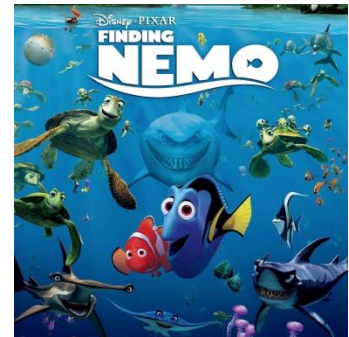
A Formula for Loglines
[Who, with an adjective] [faces what conflict] [learns/does what] [to pursue/achieve goal] [but the conflict is intensified] [the character passes the test/suggest thematic resolution]

Who, with an adjective] An overprotective father
[faces what conflict] watches helplessly as his son is taken captive,
[learns/does what] [to pursue/achieve goal] without hesitation begins a journey into uncharted waters to rescue him.
[but the conflict is intensified] With a very forgetful companion along for the swim, they overcome many obstacles
[the character passes the test/suggest thematic resolution] and the father finally learns to take risks and trust others, including his son.

By the end of the activity, student will be understand the new term and be able to write a log line for their own film project (film noir) later in the semester.

Understanding Mise-en-Scene

Understanding Mise-en-Scene: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity student will be able to accomplish the following tasks:

- Define the term Mise-en-Scene
- Name the 4 specific elements that constitute Mise-en-Scene
- Analyze an image of your choice and describe how the elements of Mis-en-Scene are developed within the frame to create mood and reinforce theme.

Activity is worth a total of 25 points. See rubric below for specific details on grading.

Criteria				Points Earned
Define Mise-en-Scene	5pts Specifically defined term	3 pts Basically defined term	1pt Attempted to define term	
Explain each element of Mise-en-Scene	10 pts Specially explained all elements	5 pts Basically explained most elements	3 pt Attempted to explain elements.	
Analyze Image according to the elements of Mise-en-Scene	10 pts Detailed and specific analysis of the image	5 pts Basic analysis of the image	3 pts Vague analysis of the image	

By the end of this activity students will have a clear understanding of how the director's control over what is in the frame creates believable characters and develops the story by creating mood and developing themes. This new knowledge should be applied to your own productions as you continue to evaluate images in this program and go on to develop your own productions.

Understanding Mise-En-Scene Activity

After viewing the brief video titled *Understanding Mise-en-Scene* and studying the supplemental materials with examples, you will submit the following activity within a PowerPoint Presentation format.

- Define Mise-en-Scene in your own words
- Describe each of the 4 elements of Mise-en-Scene in your own words
- Analyze an image using all 4 elements Mise-en-Scene

Choose one image from your favorite film and analyze it based on the elements of Mise-en-Scene. Explain how the elements work to create mood and develop theme within the image. You should pick a film with which you are familiar. You should understand the mood and themes of your selection.

Use the questions below to help structure your activity.
- What kind of lighting is being used and what mood does that give to the scene?
- How are the characters dressed? What information can you gather about the character based on physical appearance? How does this compare to the setting?
- What can you tell about the characters in relation to the setting?
- What emotions are their faces expressing? How is that reflected in lighting and setting?
- What is the body language between the characters? How do they feel in general and towards each other, based on this observation?
- How is theme(s) being enhanced with the elements of Mise-en-Scene?
- How is mood being created with the elements of Mise-en-Scene?

Explanation of the Understanding Mise-En-Scene Activity (For Reference)

This is not part of the above activity but is part of the lesson that would be presented to the students. It is given here for reference. For this activity, a basic example of materials would be covered before student is asked to work on their own. Images below are analyzed out loud with the teacher and the class as a group. Students will be presented two different images and then led through a demonstration of how to analyze, as well as compare and contrast, these images using their new understanding of the elements of Mise-en-Scene.

The terminology is explained by describing each of the 4 elements that constitute Mise-en-Scene: costumes/makeup, setting (set design), lighting, and "staging" (actors performance, movement of actors and camera, framing of camera to subject.)

Finally, these images are analyzed in detail explaining how the elements create mood and develop theme. (Fist image is from *Step Brothers* and the themes here are Peter Pan Syndrome and coming-of-age. The second image is from *In the Mood for Love* and themes here are moral restraint, memory, and loneliness.)
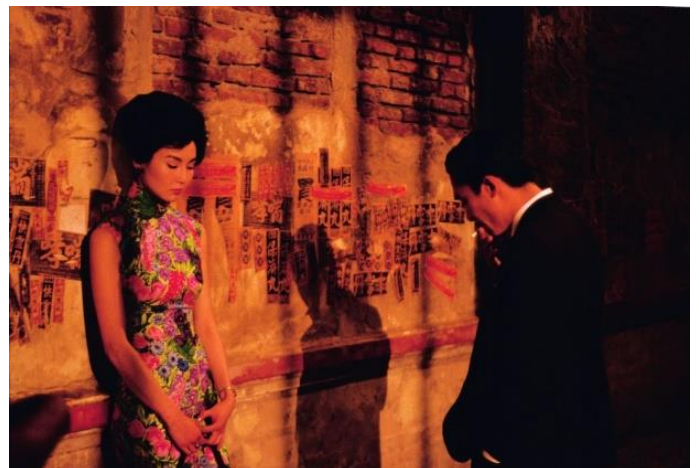
Discuss mise-en-scene by breaking down each element for the images (above.)
Students will explain how costumes/makeup, setting, lighting, and "staging" are the details that produce the image being created on screen.

- How are the characters dressed? How does that compare to the setting?
- What can you tell about the characters in relation to the setting?
- What are their faces expressing? How is that reflected in lighting and setting?
- What is the body language between the characters? How do they feel based on this observation?
- What kind of lighting is being used and what mood does that give to the image?
- How is theme being enhanced with these elements?

After demo, groups of three randomly pick an image provided by instructor and then each group creates a breakdown using the elements of the new term. They verbally present there evaluation to the class. For homework students will choose their own image, do the same evaluation and then present to the class the next day as a Power Point Presentation.

By the end of this activity students will have a clear understanding of how the director's control over what is in the frame creates believable characters and develops the story by creating mood. This new knowledge will be applied to their own productions and they will continue to evaluate images as they proceed through the program and into their careers.

Activity Three (Guided Notes)
Structured Notes

During Lectures students will be given a detailed outline of the presentation with key words, phrases, and vocabulary terms left out. Students will fill in these areas as the lecture progresses, as well as take any additional notes that may be needed.

For example, below is one of the sentences that would appear in the handout. The course covers narrative and documentary techniques and conventions, along with a very brief history of "firsts" in both areas.

With their _____films, the Lumière Brothers are considered the first _____

They are looking for "slice of life" films and are considered the first "documentarians" or "documentary filmmakers."

Honestly, the lectures are about an hour to an hour and a half long, we have three hour classes twice a week so keeping an engaged student is a challenge when it is not a "production" based course.

This activity works in many ways, but most importantly it keeps the students actively engaged by wanting (needing) to discover the answers. At the same, this activity creates a study guide AND keeps the lecture on track (we all know those students who desperately ask to see the slide for just a few more seconds as they hurriedly write definitions WORD FOR WORD.) I am also planning for this activity to allow me to do away with the "quiz review" since during that activity I basically present to them all the answers to the quiz questions. Instead of a quiz review, the time can be used to further expand their knowledge about other course concepts.

Addressing Bloom's Taxonomy

These are only 3 simple examples of how active learning techniques, which are activities where a student must think about what they are doing while they are doing it, can be applied in the classroom to support content presented in a lecture. The top level of Bloom's Taxonomy is creating (assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write) asks can the student create a new product or point of view? These activities accomplish this goal.

 In the first activity, the student learns how to write a logline then creates their own. In the second activity, the student evaluates different images and then develops a breakdown of the image. Afterwards, the same skill is applied individually on an image of the student's choosing and a PowerPoint presentation is created to present to the class. The final activity might seem less engaging than the other two; however it has its own merits. As is the case for most people sitting through any lecture there is a tendency to "tune out," so to speak. But if there is an activity or assignment on which the student can focus and be actively looking for answers during the lecture, the student is more likely to stay engaged.