

Communications Technology

Best Practices for Safety Administration in the TGJ Classroom

Course Involves Video, Audio, Graphic Design, Animation, Communication Skills
What can be dangerous about that!? It's just fun, isn't it?

TGJ TEACHER PRE-PLANNING FOR PROJECTS:

- **Assessment of Physical Risk has to be addressed for each of your projects:**
 - Planning and reviewing your students plans for shooting footage or photographing stills or recording audio is essential
 - TGJ teacher responsibility is to have the opportunity to confirm their shoot plans to avoid them showing up with footage or material that you're concerned, *'how did they get THAT shot?'*
 - When artistic graphic work for the course can involve 'mixed media' as project materials – you need to specify on guidelines for using recycled materials, sharps, etc.
 - Using 'common sense' reminders are essential daily, visual posters as reminders of safety are useful in the classroom near the equipment signout
 - Social and equity issues need to be considered in project content and group dynamics – most students have sensitivity however you often need to discuss appropriate content inclusion for the 'isms'.
 - First aid kits and ready fire extinguisher essential in the classroom
 - Directives for students on use of media devices and phones during class time has to be specified – student should not be utilizing an .mp3 player disengaging from group work and putting their safety at risk when they are responsible to be monitoring a safety risk situation, ie. shooting in the school parking lot and not hearing a vehicle approaching.
 - Student should not be utilizing overpowered headphones in class causing hearing damage .
 - Physical blocking of scenes, ie. a fight scene sequence needs to be planned and directed for safety issues.
 - Handling lights and tripods needs specific review depending on your equipment set and classroom environment.
 - Use a buddy system in the classroom as a 'mental check' process for project work, involving the question of safety on a regular basis.
- **Classroom Environment Regular Review:**
 - Has to reflect Ministry of Labour standards, and observe aspects of the Board Health and Safety requirements
 - Questioning your room organization and physical layout where it's a mixed-use environment

- TGJ classrooms often include studio elements such as curtains, lights and light stands, small and large AV equipment devices, electrical tripping hazards in a multi-functional space
- TGJ teachers need to do a physical walk around regularly to ensure that the classroom is not setup for issues, that regular cleanliness and maintenance is being done; ie., safe outlets and not overloading circuits with multiple lights or unsafe power splitting on power bars
- Classroom and equipment management needs to have systems – standard tidying and storage of equipment procedures – supports classroom management
- Pathways in the room must be clear, and accommodate special needs students – visually impaired, wheelchair access - sometimes adjustable height tables need to be used, and rolling tables need to be locked
- Discuss with students the possibility of a fire drill or lockdown drill while they are working outside the classroom during class time
- Establish a first aid procedure for emergencies for the specific classroom, and what to do if someone has an injury at school while in our class period and conducting class work
- Sensitize students to integration of physically-challenged students in video production

TGJ TEACHER PLANNING FOR DURING PROJECTS:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
 - May be required depending on complexity of projects. For example, if students are going to make a safety video for their school's construction shop or for the robotics team during assembly of the robot, or they're going to shoot their chemistry experiment, it's essential that the students are aware that there may be a need for steel-toed boots, safety glasses, a dust mask and a specific kind of additional teacher supervision to have that type of cross-curricular project.
 - TGJ teacher has to have the communication and documentation in place to ensure clear guidelines for dealing with more risky content / shoot environment approvals prior to production.
- **Safe Use of Chemicals:**
 - Some video projects involve special effects makeup supplies, or materials that create a visual special effect so it's important to communicate issues that can occur – allergic reactions, planning for makeup and cleanup time.
 - TGJ teacher needs to be aware of a process of clarifying MSDS materials that may show up in their classroom. Ie., a claymation project with materials brought in by the student may seem innocent but may include unsafe materials depending on the supplier. The TGJ teacher has to question and examine materials.
 - Some TGJ courses utilize photography and film development chemicals so all MSDS reference materials must be in the classroom.

- **Questionable Prop Materials:**

- Use of what appears to be a weapon is not permitted in a school for the possibilities of visual misunderstandings.
- You need to clarify the safe and informed use of 'fake blood' in a scene at school – have a protocol that your administration is aware of and plan additional supervision and good group management at these times.
- Students may choose to create props which require use of small tools such as hot glue guns, hand tools, or exacto knives so specific training confirmation and documentation of specific training on a skills checklist has to be done to ensure guidelines are followed and verifiable
- When students are using recycled materials for a prop it's important to examine it for chemical, allergy, or sharp materials issues.

- **Supervision Plan:**

- Plan has to be in place for student groups or individuals who leave your home base classroom to shoot footage around the school
- Limits for project work outside the classroom need to be specified, ie. having students document who their safety partner is going to be on a weekend shoot, having additional parent permission forms for weekend shooting may be advisable depending on the nature of the content / location planned, advising additional parent supervision in a memo to parents detailing the nature of projects and safety expectations of students
- Having students sign out equipment, completing call sheets to indicate where they will be in the school is necessary
- TGI teachers walk around to verify students are where they are is essential
- Sending a special 'ID item' such as the clipboard allows other teachers and staff to know this is a 'permitted' group doing a 'permitted' activity in the school
- Having guidelines for student behaviour when travelling to and from locations in the school needs to be specified, ie. not disturbing classes in progress, noise levels, physical action levels, common sense movement for stairways, staff areas, cafeteria, stage, 'lockable' rooms
- Informing the main office of student video shoot activity is essential, communicating with hall monitors supports class management as well.
- Risk of student escalation of conflict between students from play to more serious

Storage and Equipment Issues:

- Often props from the prop collection have to be stored in tight storage areas so safe lifting of bins, reaching high storage areas has to be considered.
- Students must understand that they need a spotter and are not to overextend their strength, not take risks with step stools, chairs, low ladders
- Proper lifting techniques should be reviewed with students

Securing School Equipment

- With the increased number of portable devices / AV camera equipment in schools, there is an increased risk of theft
- To protect these valuable assets it is important to take proactive steps to minimize the risk and severity of losses
- Staff should ensure that all equipment, Board and personal, is secured when not in use
- For TGJ classrooms, it's advisable that bags and coats not be permitted to protect from clutter and equipment theft

The following are a few strategies which can help reduce theft, vandalism and accidental damage:

- Use of cables to secure equipment
- When not in use all portable equipment should be properly stored in locked cupboards within locked classrooms or a designated locked storage area
- Maintain a current inventory list of all electronic equipment, including serial numbers, keep manuals and warranties and P.O.'s on file
- Check all exterior doors to ensure that they are secure when locked
- Ensure security systems are activated
- Keep valuable equipment away from windows after hours
- Specify to students about not leaving school AV equipment in a car, protecting it from moisture and rough damage with cases and plastic bags

TGJ TEACHER PLANNING FOR PROJECT FOLLOWUP:

Production Environment - Worker Safety Awareness:

- Having a guest speaker come in from a Union like IATSE is a good method to have students understand the seriousness of safety in a professional film environment, as well guests from the IT and networking profession also may have insight on relevant safety issues when they are speakers

Documentation that Safety Training Has Been Completed:

- Formal Classroom Safety Guidelines Review has to be completed – keep track of the date(s) that you present your safety content to students, document safety initiatives and lessons conducted
- Course Outline should include overview of risks and students and parents should sign off acknowledging that safety training is occurring (handout example provided, available digitally via erin.carey@tdsb.on.ca)
- Consider specific equipment safety, ie. a dolly and track for moving tripods
- Emphasize in curriculum that all communications technology industries have safety factors involved in the workplace
- Clearly establish classroom rules and consequences for students regarding production work
- Refer to the Experiential Learning AW site for updated Safety Documentation and general guidelines for safety training checklists
- Carefully evaluate your specific site for any unique safety requirements