College of Arts
T&L Innovation case studies
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Lincoln School of Fine & Performing Arts

Teaching Writing for the Stage in a socially distanced, blended and (sometimes) asynchronous environment

Asynchronous Learning
The aim of Asynchronous learning in the 'Writing For The Stage' module was to replicate workshop content without the presence of the tutor. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a workshop group of fourteen needed to be split into two groups to meet room capacity restrictions. This required some content to be delivered asynchronously, via blended delivery and in a socially distanced manner when face to face. The aim was to create meaningful, engaged and stimulating content for helping to generate, redraft, critique, and situate/understand 'Writing for the Stage'.

Asynchronous Tasks: Self-Reflection
Early workshops for the module were geared towards responsive and instinctive tasks on stimuli. To help students develop a system of instinctive drafting with more reflective redrafting (a method of approach that could be applied to the assessment process) students were then set more reflective, asynchronous tasks. This included…

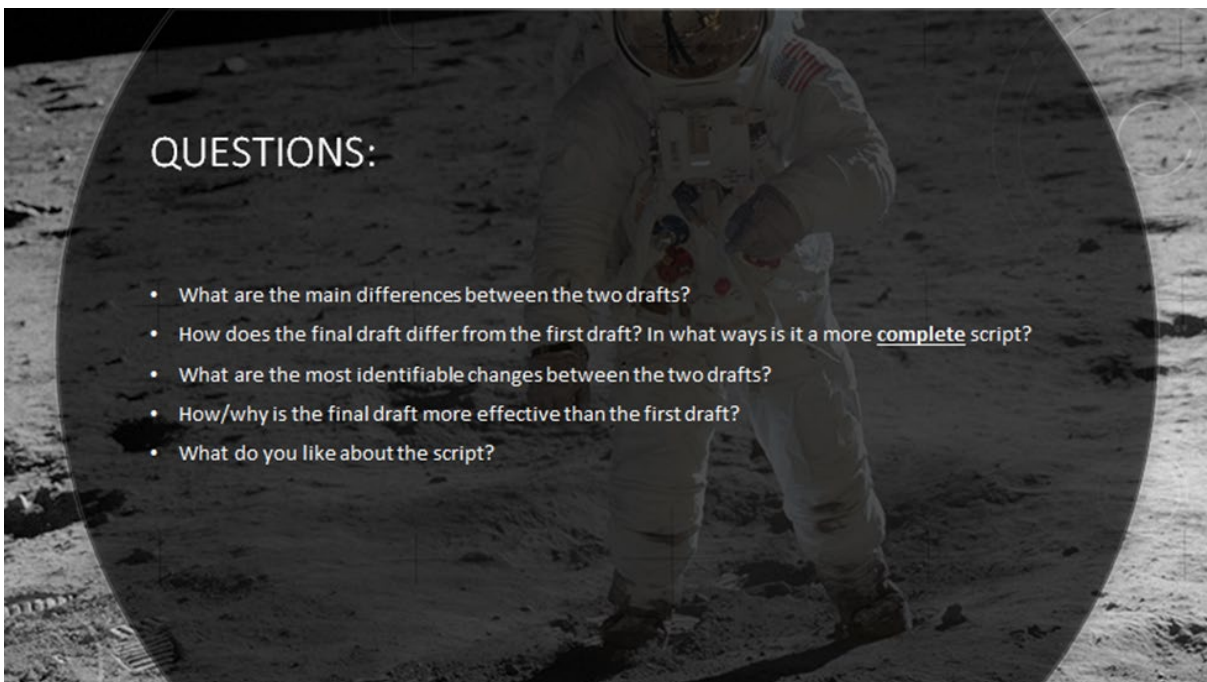– Responding to synchronous content (See images 1 + 2 below)

ONCE YOU HAVE WRITTEN YOUR RESPONSE…

- How does theatre represent this? How can it? Should it? What should performance writing be about?
- I want you to write down your responses to this…Provide examples of instances where you have seen theatre that has achieved examples of your answers. If not theatre…think about examples from film or television.
- ALSO…Write down answers to the following…
- (What do you want to develop as a writer?) What tools have we got at our disposal to try to do that? Character, Language/form/narrative shape/content?

– Reviewing example scripts. Reviewing the example script at different stages of the drafting process (see image 3).

QUESTIONS:

- What are the main differences between the two drafts?
- How does the final draft differ from the first draft? In what ways is it a more **complete** script?
- What are the most identifiable changes between the two drafts?
- How/why is the final draft more effective than the first draft?
- What do you like about the script?

Workshop: Socially distanced learning
Workshop content, (which was only to return to face to face from week 4 onwards) considered the ways in which live performance can use unspoken communication to help communicate with audiences. This included replacing text with gesture, exploring the proximity of performers within a performance space, and lighting impact on atmosphere, narrative and location.

Impact and Student Responses

The approaches allowed for the smooth transition of physical workshop content to blended/socially distanced learning. Students had the following to say about the module:

"*Being able to creatively explore my own idea with as much free reign as I like*"

"*Feeling like part of a team of writers, not left on my own to simply go at it alone*"

"*My favourite part was experimenting with the lighting*"

"*Trialling the play in workshops*"

"*Just a thank you for making this module still very accessible in combined online and face-to-face learning*"

(Data taken from the Module Evaluation Surveys).