Video Shot Types and Storyboarding

*This activity will introduce participants to different shot types and get them storyboarding
to prepare for a movie project.*

Project Type: Digital media, Creative Tactile

Group/Individual: Collaborative or Individual

Lesson Plan Audience: Maker Mentor

Time: 1 hour

Hard Skills: Understanding different types of shots, storyboarding, pre-production/planning for video project

Soft Skills: Media literacy

Ideal # of Participants: Works well in a small group (under 10)

Age Group: 11 and up; younger kids may have trouble with the concept but can help with the storyboard art

Ideas for taking it further:
If a participant is really into storyboarding, they may want to try making a comic! If you make a movie out of your
storyboard, you can display the storyboard art at your premiere or turn it into a zine or booklet to hand out.

Difficulties/Tips:
In our experience, some program participants can at first be intimidated by how much drawing storyboarding entails.
Encourage participants by letting them know that stick figures and written notes are totally appropriate. The focus is on
clearly communicating what needs to happen in the video.
This lesson plan can be used for any kind of video project your group might want to work on, but the focus is somewhat
on narrative, story-based video. If you want to make short documentary videos, check out this great toolkit from
Messages in Motion.
For more practice identifying different shot types, watch a trailer for a movie your participants are interested in, pausing
as the video cuts from one scene to another and asking the participants to call out the shot type they see.

Materials:
A board or large sheets of paper to draw on
Something to draw with
Something to watch videos on as a group

Steps:

1. Watch this video about different shot types.

2. Ask participants what they think a "shot" is. Talk about how a shot is all the footage between when a camera starts and stops recording, or all the footage between two edits or cuts in a video. Ask participants why using different shot types is important. Talk about how using different types of shots makes the video more visually dynamic and interesting.

3. The three shot types you'll be talking about are Long Shot, Medium Shot, and Close-Up. Refer back to the video above and ask participants to describe what they see in the Long Shot. A Long Shot typically includes a whole person from head to toe. It is used to orient the viewer and show where the action is taking place. Draw a rectangle on your board or paper and ask one of the participants to come up and draw a Long Shot in the rectangle.

4. Refer back to the video above and ask participants to describe what they see in a Medium Shot. A Medium Shot typically includes one or two people, shown from the waist up. It is useful when showing a conversation between characters or to draw a viewer's attention to a specific character and their actions. Draw a rectangle on your board or paper and ask one of the participants to come up and draw a Medium Shot in the rectangle.
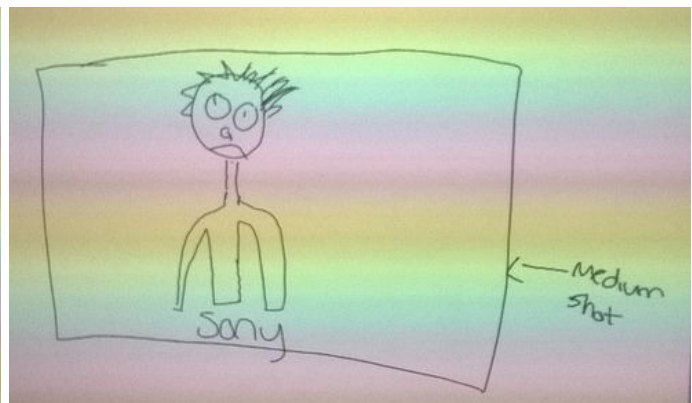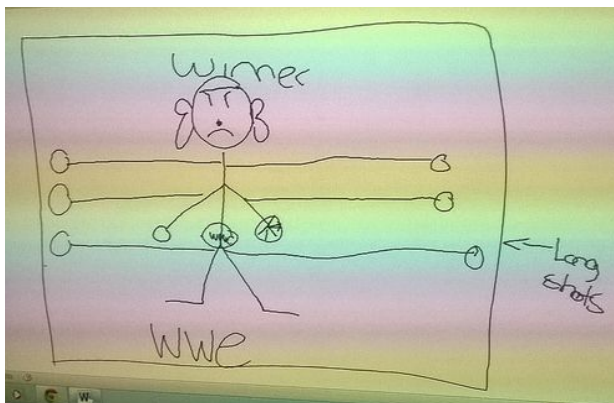
5. Refer back to the video above and ask participants to describe what they see in a Close-Up. A Close-Up typically includes one person's face, but a close-up could also focus on something else, like an object or an action. This type of shot is useful for showing a character's emotions or reaction to something as well as for drawing the viewer's attention to an action - for example a character's hand slipping something into their pocket. Draw a rectangle on your board or paper and ask one of the participants to come up and draw a Close-Up shot in the rectangle.
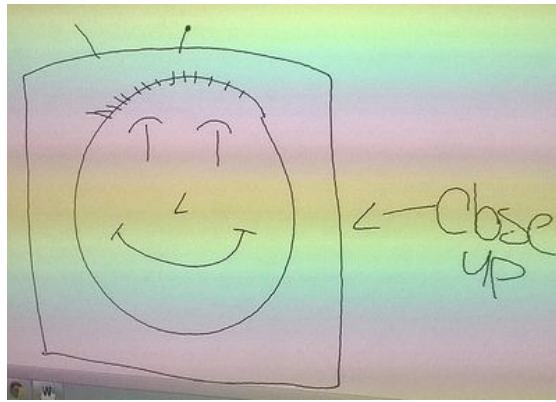
6. Now you will use these three types of shots to create a storyboard with the group. A storyboard is a guide that filmmakers use when working on a movie. It's a way to turn a script or a story into visuals and to prepare for filming. The storyboard shows all the shots that you will need to film in order to tell the story. Some storyboards also have notes or dialogue that goes with the images. Look at a couple of example storyboards with the participants and have them identify different shot types they notice in them. It is a good idea to look up storyboards for films that your participants are interested in. You can find many storyboards online (ones created for actual films and fan-created ones). Here is a Transformers one, a Harry Potter one, and a My Neighbor Totoro one. Practice "reading" storyboards together - ask participants to describe what is happening in each of the storyboarded scenes you look at.

7. As a group, come up with a short story to storyboard together. You can make one up or choose one that many people are likely to be familiar with. In the below example, our group chose to storyboard the story of Icarus. Draw 6 rectangles on your board or paper and have different participants come up and draw in parts of the story. It is a good idea to start with an Establishing Long Shot that shows your characters and their location. Make sure that the storyboard has at least one of every shot type!

8. Now that you've gone over the basics of storyboarding, you can apply it to a movie project your group wants to work on. Participants can draw their own storyboards or use printed out templates like this one.