

foley workshop

LENGTH: 3 days/6 total hours

OBJECTIVES: Students will create foley sound effects and assign music to a clip from the film Wall-E. Students will have a basic understanding of what sound design is, how sound is used in filmmaking, and how to creatively add sound to visuals.

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DAY 1

INTRODUCTION TO SOUND DESIGN

Warm Up: *Create sounds from a single source.*

- Pass around a piece of paper (or any 'simple' object) and ask each student to create a new sound with it.

(Sample dialogue: Was anyone surprised at how many different sounds you could make from this piece of paper?)

Critical Thinking: Four Elements of Sound Design

Learn what elements make up sound design: SFX, Music, Dialogue, Silence

- Guide students into a short discussion about what sounds they hear throughout their day.

Ask: What are sounds we listen to throughout the day?

Brainstorm examples (bells, birds, weather, cafeteria noise, traffic, music, talking, silence) and display student's ideas. Lead students into creating the following four categories: **Sound Effects (abbreviated as SFX), Dialogue, Music, and Silence.**

SFX: *How sound effects create the environment of the film*

- First watch the following Wall-E Clip [without sound \(mute\)](#). Ask the students to imagine they are sound designers and see if they can put together any sound effects.

(Sample dialogue: Could anyone imagine their own sound effects/music in their head while watching this? [Ask students who haven't seen the film: What kind of character do you think Wall-E is? What kind of character do you think Eve is?])

- [Wall-E Clip 1 \(Space Walk Clip\)](#)

- Watch the clip with sound and discuss.

(Sample dialogue: What were some differences between your sound effects and the sound effects they actually used? What about music? Do the characteristics of Wall-E or Eve change?)

Music: *How music influences a scene*

- Watch the following two trailers. One is of the classic Mary Poppins film from 1960. The second a trailer using clips from the same movie but with a "scary" undertone due to the music.

- [Mary Poppins Original Trailer](#)

- [Mary Poppins Alternative Trailer](#)

- Discuss how the music changes the overall tone or mood of the movie.

Dialogue: Introduce ADR (Additional Dialogue Recording) + Post Production

- Listen to the following clip but **do not show the video.**

Ask: What do you think is imagine is happening in this dialogue?

- **Kid Snippets: Fast Food**

- Ask what age the voices sound like they might be, where the voices might be taking place, or any other questions that promote students to share the visual image they might've had while listening to this dialogue.

- Show students the visual with the audio now.

- Explain the following: In this case, the audio was recorded first and the actors used the dialogue between two toddlers to create a live action version of the toddlers' pretend scenario of getting fast food. Films, however, always re-record the dialogue.

- **Rerecording the dialogue is called ADR which stands for "additional dialogue recording."** Actors and female actors act out scenes with microphones but must go to a studio to rerecord all of their lines. This is so dialogue can be heard smoothly. ADR helps overcome difficult recording situations, such as scenes where sounds don't exist like space, or scenes that might be difficult to record dialogue, like during a thunderstorm or a battle. This is recorded in what is called post-production. Pre-production is preparation for a film (scripting, storyboarding, etc), in production is the filming itself (shooting), and post-production is after shooting (sound mixing, foley, ADR, editing).

Foley: Creating in-house sound effects

- In addition to dialogue being difficult to capture on location, sound effects are nearly impossible to record accurately! (Ex: cartoons and animations, footsteps, punches)

- **A (very) general SFX rule:** When there is visible movement on screen, it should be accompanied by a sound.

- Foley artists use anything to create what they need. Before computers and digital recording, foley artists would make all kinds of small machines to create sounds.

- Watch [Casey Jr. Foley Clip](#)

- Discuss any familiar and unfamiliar things to create sounds.

Activity: Creating familiar sounds with unlikely objects/Sound has no inherent quality to the object of which its made

- Set out a variety of objects in the room for the students to pick from.

- Display a list of sounds in the room. Ex: bird wings, heartbeat, thunder, rain, fire, waterfall

- Students can move around and try to manipulate different objects to create these sound effects or discover their own sound effects.

- Have a show and tell/Ask other students to describe the sounds characteristics/Guess what the sound is/Guess what object(s) the foley artist is using

Foley Project Introduction: *Brainstorming as a foley artist*

- Download Wall-E clip with no sound and show. ([Link to clip with sound found on YouTube](#)) (*I do not recommend showing the students the clip with sound at all during this activity.*)
- Discuss some ideas for what kind of tone and mood the clip should be.
- Decide the following items:
 - Tone of clip.
 - Make or provide a shot list.
 - What kind of music? Provide samples or ask students to submit/source samples. (Google Drive, class folder, etc.) Ambitious classes can create their own musical soundtrack.
 - What kinds of sounds are needed?
 - What kinds of objects will we need to create the sounds?
 - Can anyone bring any items with them?
- End the session by decided who will bring what and what kind of clothes to wear.

DAY 2

MAKE SOME NOISE: FOLEY WORKSHOP

Review: *Recording Order*

- Review the four elements of sound design with the students.

Choosing a soundtrack: *Pick a song*

- Listen to the samples provided by teacher or students and discuss which music samples work best with the clip.

Preparing to Record: *Listening to the Room*

- Start students by slowing their breathing and honing in their listening to the sound of the room and all of its noises.
- Explain: The more isolated a sound can be recorded, the easier it is to put in the movie.
- Go over that recording requires absolute silence but constant thinking and analyzing. The students should learn how to use some kind of recorder, whether it be their phones or whether it is a microphone to computer system.
- Teach students about recording extra seconds before and after the sound clip for easy editing.
- Pick various students to be the recorder and switch off the people that will be performing the foley work. It may also be fun to take turns at a director role to help make final decisions between two sounds or help decide which sound/source sounds best.

Recording: *Using Technology and Sound*

- Spend the day recording the various sounds needed for the Wall-E clip.
- Assist students in recording techniques, such as putting the microphone as close to the sound source as possible.

DAY 3

POST-PRODUCTION: DIRECTING + BALANCING SOUND

Rough Draft: *Directing the Final Mix*

- Listen to a rough mix of all the sound effects in the correct places and the music at a random level.
- Discuss how sound designers have to decide how loud and quiet sound effects, music, and dialogue should be throughout a minute clip of animation (like Wall-E).
- Have the students decide what the levels should be and listen to their discussion for justifying certain changes.

Final Draft: *Final Review and Comparison*

- Play the original clip for the students so they can see and hear how their clips are different. Share with others and make the clip available to them.
- [Link to clip with sound found on YouTube](#)

The Man Behind the Soundtrack of Wall-E: *Ben Burtt*

- Ben Burtt is the sound designer of Wall-E. He was also the sound designer for Star Wars and Indiana Jones.
- Because Wall-E is not heavily based on dialogue, the director Andrew Stanton wanted to ensure that all of the sounds of each character and environment were figured out before post-production.
- Watch this video of Ben Burtt discussing sound design for Wall-E and how he created it.
- [Wall-E Animation Foley and Sound Design \(about 19 minutes long\)](#)
- Discuss the video and reflect on the entire foley workshop experience.