



The Camera Masterclass

A one-day course from PanMedia

Objective:

- ◆ *Each candidate to be confident addressing the camera – whether presenting intimately to the camera on a laptop, or to a flipcam, or to a full-video crew in studio or on location, or down-the-line to a remote recording unit.*

Preparation:

- ◆ *Each participant is asked to bring research materials on a subject that is relevant to his or her area of work which we can turn into a script for the camera*

What is the rationale of this workshop?



*“The greatest thing about acting is sincerity.
If you can fake that, you got it made.”*

George Burns

It’s a good gag; and as with most gags, there’s a foundation in truth. All performance, whether an interview, a presentation or a speech delivered to camera, is acting. All acting is, of course, role-playing. All role-playing is about delivering, as if newly arriving, “live”, at that moment, and with every possible impression of spontaneity and sincerity, something – and someone – studiously created and rehearsed.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, each of us, in our lives, plays many parts, easily conjuring up, for some occasions, a different persona compounded of different elements of our personalities: family person, office person, leader, subordinate, party host, party guest, citizen, neighbour, games-player, holidaymaker... Interviewer, interviewee, presenter, speaker-to-camera...

A reluctance, or an inability, to confront and work at these basics is the main reason people fail when they perform. So here’s what we’ll be working on and what you’ll understand and remember:

1. I am playing a role – so which elements of me make up this character, and how do I identify, unite, strengthen and control them?
2. This character is involved in a business of pretending (or, to use George Burns’ harsher word, “faking”). So how do I acknowledge that and, paradoxically, make the pretence truthful, alive and persuasive?
3. Do I know what I’m going to say? And how I’m going to say it? And how I’m going to give it power?



Programme

(All to-camera performances will be recorded, and, where appropriate, replayed for analysis. Each candidate will also receive a DVD of all performances at the day's end)

09:00: Introductions

09:15: Technical Overture – A walk through various cameras and camera techniques.

09:45: Fakery & Role-Play, Part One – An exercise to loosen the performance muscles.

10:15: Who Am I? – Identifying, unifying and strengthening each individual's performance character.

11:00: Fakery & Role Play, Part Two – The second performance concentrates on deploying character in an imaginative scenario

11:30: *“Lights – Camera – Prose!!!”* – It's a fallacy that video is averse to “Talking Heads” – witness Alan Bennett's acclaimed series of the same name. What the camera resists, and the audience detests, is a prosaic talking head – someone trying but failing to breathe life into a slab of text which was written to be read on the page, not spoken to an audience. In this session we look at how to create a script that uses action, anecdote and energy to compel attention.

12:00: Preparing the corporate story – We work up a deliverable corporate narrative as a script.

13:00: Lunch.

13:30: Autocue Session – The script from the morning's session having been converted for autocue, we experiment with and learn how to use the device effectively.

14:30: Starting to Break Free – The corporate story now moves on to bullet-point cue cards, which are used in the next to-camera session.

16:00: Ad-Libbing at last – We let go of all guides and deliver the story without notes or props.

17:00: Discussions and conclusions

Fees on application