

Cinema Studies program offers film workshop to elementary students

Students and faculty in Oakland University's Cinema Studies program recently introduced a group of fourth and fifth graders to the art of filmmaking during a month-long workshop at Meadow Brook Elementary in Rochester Hills.

The workshop – which was supported through a community engagement grant from the OU College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office – helped 18 elementary students produce and star in their own original short films. Working in small groups, the students used iPads to create

six short films titled "**Hide and Seek**," "**Mystery of the Book Thief**," "**The Right Move**," "**Just Poking Fun**," "**Mission Impizzable**," and "**The Great Idea**."



Cinema Studies alum Kelsey Kobylarek served as the lead instructor of the workshop, which taught 18 Meadow Brook Elementary students how to produce a short film.

OU Cinema Studies professors Kyle Edwards and Adam Gould partnered with Meadow Brook Element School Principal Seth Berg to coordinate the workshop. They were joined by Cinema Studies alum Kels Kobylarek – who served as the lead instructor for the workshop – and six current Cinema Studies students, who guided the children through each step of the filmmaking process. Throughout the workshop, the Meadow Brook students were given opportunities to try different jobs on set, including director, actor and camera operator. The workshop concluded with a screening of the films before an audience that included the children's families.

OU students Zachary Tse and Sarah Griffith, who helped teach the workshop, said they enjoyed seeing the spark of excitement the children showed when learning about film production.

"The kids would light up when learning about even the simplest of things, because for most of them, it was the first time they had a true 'class' that

and they were seeing that there was so much more to learn,” Tse said. “We provided the props and equipment, the kids brainstormed, and then by the end of the workshop, had learned how to storyboard and plan out how to shoot their ideas, and were getting the experience of creating something they had imagined, on film.”

Griffith added, ‘It was amazing to see what they came up with for the films and how quickly they picked up on all of the material we taught them. By teaching students filmmaking at a young age, hopefully they continue to create their own films, figure out what they enjoy making, and use it as a medium to express themselves and think outside the box.’”



From left: Professor Adam Gould, Matthew Lundy, Morgan McGivern, Cami Bacon, Zachary Tse, Noah Thulin, Kelsey Kobylarek, and Sarah Griffith.

Tse also touted the workshop as a valuable opportunity for children to develop skills that are increasingly useful in the digital age, particularly in the job market.

“It’s incredibly important for kids, not just in the arts and in filmmaking, but in the world nowadays to have a program that teaches the basics of video production, because we live in a digital world now,” said Tse citing the rise of YouTube and other video-based platforms. “Kids who aren’t even looking into filmmaking as a career can come and learn the basics of video production and it will probably be very valuable to them because at one point or another, most companies will need some sort of video.”

The CAS Dean’s Office Community Engagement Grant funded the purchase of iPads, lenses, tripods and audio recording equipment for the workshop, noted Dr. Edwards, who serves as the Cinema Studies Program Director.

“From our perspective, as OU Cinema Studies faculty, we really appreciate the way in which this initiative connects our talented students to the surrounding community,” Edwards said. “We were so impressed with this initiative, both in terms of the creative skills developed by the elementary students and the teaching and mentorship experience gained by the OU teaching assistants that we plan to offer it again in May 2014 and, perhaps, expand to other area schools in the future.”

To learn more about the Cinema Studies program, visit the [website](#).