

Name of group: South Devon Players'
Project name: Acting courses-Brixham Theatre

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Project name: Acting courses-Brixham Theatre
Date project started: October 2022
Date project finished or is due to finish: March 2023
How did you use the funding you got The funding was used, as per the application: - Hiring the stage at Brixham Theatre to run the workshops (educational rate for workshops is £35 for 4 hours). This equates to £240 over six months - Printing posters and flyers to advertise the classes. £60, via local printing company.
Did the project achieve what you intended? How did it do this? It did, we had an intake of 10 people, largely beginners, who all want to develop careers in theatre as performers, or to use the skills (communication, self presentation) in transferable ways for wider employment. They came from a wide variety of backgrounds, we had five students who have various mixtures of autism, ADHD, and severe trauma-based anxiety, within the class. Initially just before the first class, two people dropped out citing fear of meeting new

people, but these spaces were quickly re-advertised and filled again.

Each class reflected different aspects of working within theatre, including exploring script for information about characters, working within a stage space, exploring status of characters, vocal projection, applying for auditions and agents (and avoiding the common scams), body language, and finally in preparing a short videoed performance of a monologue, to use for ongoing performance applications.

By the end of the course four of the students had already found professional acting work as a result of this course, a very high outcome in something as competitive as acting and performance.

We have also had excellent word of mouth from the students to other people, and now have a waiting list of people asking to attend when we run a course like this again, so over the coming summer we shall be looking into doing this again next winter, also building on what we have learned running it.

What impact has your project had on the people involved?

The students have verbally fed back that they have found

- increased knowledge about seeking work as performers and entertainers, and how to work within a theatre or performance environment (eg technical, communication skills, personal confidence, how to keep safe when applying for freelance work)
- Respect and validation (some of the students had found themselves marginalised from adult education classes and work in the past due to mental health (anxiety etc), neurodiversity, and in the case of one, not being native British. They fed back that the open, supportive and accepting atmosphere, helped them regain confidence and a sense of self worth.
- Some of the students followed up on audition information provided to them, and have since become involved in (varying) amateur and professional theatre, with two also now confident to apply for regional film work.
- All of the students have developed small professional portfolios toward finding work.





What have you learnt from doing this project?

While this was set up as a six month course, and we did not accept new attendees after the second session, as there would be too much to catch up on, we feel that it may work better as more stand alone sessions that people can attend either as a full course or as one-offs. This does require some planning and additional arrangement. We have learned that it does fill a gap of adult education provision not otherwise available in the Torbay areas and that as word spreads that it is a safe, pleasant environment, that there is a great deal of interest.

Have you any learning from your project to share with others thinking of doing something similar?

Classes like this should really be taught from lived experience, with empathy for a wide diverse range of people. Student feedback should be listened to at all stages. When doing a course related to employability like this, using a space of the type that the students could find themselves working in, is also critical so that they can see the relation of the skills they are learning, with the actual space, tech, and facilities that they would be working with.