
Executive Certificate in Acting for Film and Television

Script Analysis and Character Development

In the Executive Certificate in Acting for Film and Television, script analysis and character development are two crucial areas of focus. Understanding key terms and vocabulary in these areas is essential for success in the program and in the industry. Here, we will explore some of the most important terms and concepts in script analysis and character development.

Script Analysis:

1. **Beat:** A beat is a unit of action or a moment in a script that contains a single thought or intention. Actors use beats to break down a script into manageable pieces and to identify the emotional shifts that occur within a scene.
2. **Objective:** An objective is the character's goal or desire in a scene. It is what the character wants to achieve or accomplish. Objectives are often broken down into smaller, incremental steps called tactics.
3. **Obstacle:** An obstacle is anything that stands in the way of the character achieving their objective. Obstacles can be physical, emotional, or psychological, and they create conflict and tension in a scene.
4. **Subtext:** Subtext is the underlying meaning or emotion that is not explicitly stated in the script. Actors use subtext to add depth and nuance to their performance, and to convey the character's inner thoughts and feelings.
5. **Given Circumstances:** Given circumstances are the facts and details about the character and the world of the play that are established in the script. Actors use given circumstances to build a believable and consistent character.

Character Development:

1. **Character Arc:** A character arc is the transformation or growth that a character undergoes over the course of a story. It involves a change in the character's beliefs, values, or behavior as a result of the experiences they have.
2. **Backstory:** Backstory is the history and background of a character that is not explicitly stated in the script. Actors use backstory to create a rich and nuanced character, and to understand the motivations and influences that shape their behavior.
3. **Wants and Needs:** Wants and needs are the character's desires and essential requirements. Wants are what the character thinks they want, while needs are what they really need. Understanding the difference between wants and needs is essential for creating a three-dimensional character.
4. **Inner Conflict:** Inner conflict is the struggle between a character's conflicting desires or beliefs. It creates tension and drama within the character and drives their actions and decisions.
5. **Relationships:** Relationships are the connections and dynamics between characters. Actors use relationships to create believable and complex interactions, and to reveal the character's personality and

values.

Examples and Practical Applications:

In the film "The Silence of the Lambs," Clarice Starling, played by Jodie Foster, has a clear objective: to catch the serial killer Buffalo Bill. Her obstacles include her own personal fears and insecurities, as well as the manipulative and cunning behavior of the character Hannibal Lecter. Through her interactions with Lecter, Clarice undergoes a transformation and gains the confidence and skills she needs to catch Buffalo Bill.

To analyze this script, an actor might break down the scene into beats, identify Clarice's objective and obstacles, and explore the subtext and given circumstances. They might also consider Clarice's backstory, wants and needs, inner conflict, and relationships with other characters.

Challenges:

Analyzing a script and developing a character can be challenging, but it is essential for creating a compelling and believable performance. Actors must be able to break down a script and identify the key elements of the story, as well as understand the motivations and influences that shape their character's behavior. They must also be able to use their imagination and creativity to bring the character to life and to convey the subtext and emotions that are not explicitly stated in the script.

Conclusion:

In the Executive Certificate in Acting for Film and Television, script analysis and character development are fundamental skills that actors must master. By understanding key terms and vocabulary, actors can break down a script, identify the emotional shifts and conflicts, and create a three-dimensional character. Through practice and experience, actors can develop their skills in script analysis and character development and become confident and compelling performers.