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units 3 & 4

## [ heinemann ] MEDIA 2

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# Contents

|      |                   |  |                 |
|------|-------------------|--|-----------------|
| v    | Foreword          |  | John Schwartz   |
| vii  | Note to Teachers  |  | Roger Dunscombe |
| viii | About the Authors |  |                 |
| ix   | Acknowledgements  |  |                 |

## 1 Narrative | Kevin Tibaldi

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| 2  | Film narrative      |
| 2  | Production elements |
| 19 | Story elements      |
| 33 | Extension           |
| 34 | Chapter summary     |
| 35 | Exam preparation    |

## 37 Social Values and Social Contexts | Roger Dunscombe

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 38 | Social values                              |
| 39 | Social values in the text                  |
| 42 | Whose social values does the text reflect? |
| 43 | Social values in print                     |
| 46 | Social values in television                |
| 51 | Social values in film                      |
| 56 | Social values and animation                |
| 60 | Extension                                  |
| 62 | Chapter summary                            |
| 63 | Exam preparation                           |

**sample pages  
only**

# IV

## 65 Media Influence | Melinda Anastasios-Roberts

- 66 What is communication?
- 67 Mass media
- 68 Communication models and theories
- 69 Cultural effects and reception theories
- 70 Communication models
- 84 Texts, effects and audiences
- 85 Language in the media
- 93 Evaluating and analysing research
- 100 Extension
- 104 Chapter summary
- 105 Exam preparation

## 107 Production | Andrew Hyde

- 108 Generating ideas
- 110 Intention
- 112 Audience
- 114 Specifications
- 115 Media skills
- 124 Designing the production plan
- 141 Extension
- 145 Chapter summary

- 146 Glossary
- 148 Bibliography
- 149 Index

**sample pages  
only**

# foreword

John Schwartz

*Project Consultant*

The early years of the 21st century see us all living through a new Information Revolution. The rise and rise of huge multinational media organisations and the sheer volume of media content can often make us feel overwhelmed by 'information overload'.

The convergence of media organisations with the telecommunications and information technology industry sectors have seen remarkable transformations of our media landscape. Notions of 'new media' now include the contributions that the Internet, mobile phone technology and cable and satellite delivery systems make. These new media can provide huge amounts of content in a vast array of communications networks.

How are we, as both students of the media and as citizens of this new age, going to make sense of all of this? How can we understand the media, which seemingly saturates us, and contribute our voices to it?

The growing popularity of Media Studies in schools throughout Australia is a most welcome development for those who are convinced that it is a crucial aspect of modern-day education. The steady growth and popularity of the subject also serves to remind us of our role as fully participating citizens in what we would like to think is an open, democratic community.

No single text book can ever hope to cover every single media issue that might come under investigation in every classroom. Yet, in a systematic way, *Heinemann Media 2* covers some of the most important areas of concern which are investigated in the final year(s) of secondary study throughout much of Australia.

The chapters have been written by well-credentialed, senior media teachers who have developed expertise in specific media areas and who are also well versed on the theories which underlie them. In addition, the authors are highly recognised as teachers who have contributed enormously to the continuing development of media curriculum.

The resulting practical benefits of this are evident when the reader encounters the challenging classroom exercises and questions as well as the extension work presented in each of the chapters. There is also a very useful glossary of essential terms.

In the first chapter on Narrative, Kevin Tibaldi carefully defines this key concept before systematically reviewing the major production and story elements of his chosen field of film. He illustrates these important terms with plenty of examples of both contemporary and classic films, which help the reader come to a deeper understanding of narrative construction. This approach ultimately allows for analysis of film, as well as nearly all genres of television and radio, including music videos and most forms of advertising.

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In his chapter on Social Values and Social Contexts, Roger Dunscombe explores the central proposition that media representations are not produced and understood in a social and cultural vacuum. It is made clear that all media representations have a great deal to do with the culturally specific time and place in which they are produced and consumed. The operation of particular ideologies and value systems is explored in classic television series such as *I Love Lucy* and *MASH*, *Women's Weekly* advertisements and the film classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The contentious issues surrounding allegations of media power in shaping mass audience opinion are carefully surveyed by Melinda Anastasios-Roberts in her chapter on Media Influence. In what is often seen as a theoretically difficult area of study, the reader is systematically introduced to the historic debates about what the media 'does' to audiences, as well as what audiences do with the media. Throughout this analysis, specific examples of moral panics, health campaigns as well as the age-old arguments about the effects of media violence are carefully explored.

The final chapter on Production, by Andrew Hyde, introduces the reader to actual processes of production in the areas of film, multimedia, photography, print and radio. The emphasis here is on the generation of ideas, setting out intentions, consideration of audiences as well as the designing of specific production plans. While this is set within important practical and skill-based aspects of media studies, the important connection between theory and practice is still made clear. Many examples of the processes of production are worked through within this chapter.

All of the media texts and illustrations which have been chosen by the authors to highlight particular issues were considered to be significant either because they were interesting contemporary texts, or because they demonstrated the lasting resonance of older works.

Readers of this book will benefit enormously from the continuously updated, attached website—where new selections, examples and illustrations as chosen by the authors, will appear on a regular basis. In this way, the book will remain fresh as it includes the most recent texts and allows the technologies of new media to keep readers both involved and motivated.

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# PRODUCTION

BY ANDREW HYDE

“ Remember how powerful a photograph can be. More powerful than any bombs. As powerful as love ”

‘... I WAS SO SCARED I STARTED RUNNING UP THE ROAD WITH MY COUSINS. THEN I SAW FOUR BOMBS. SUDDENLY, THERE WAS NAPALM EVERYWHERE, AND I WAS CAUGHT IN THE TERRIBLE FIRE. MY CLOTHES, MY SKIN, BURNING. BY SOME MIRACLE, MY FEET WEREN'T BURNED, SO I COULD RUN. I WAS SCREAMING, “NONG QUA! NONG QUA!” TOO HOT, TOO HOT! ... THAT PICTURE CHANGED THE WAY PEOPLE LOOKED AT THE VIETNAM WAR, AT ALL WARS.’

Kim P. 2003

Media **production** is an art, one which needs to be learned, not as in an individual work of art such as a painting, but as an organised process. Whether we are advertising a big-name brand, producing a political poster or directing a major film, a disciplined and systematic approach is essential in media production.

The best way to develop your ability to communicate your ideas is to make as many media products as you can. It is very difficult to learn to play the guitar like Jimi Hendrix by simply listening to his recordings: you have to lock yourself in the garage and practise until your fingers bleed. The best way to develop your ability to communicate your

ideas is to make as many media products as you can. By developing an understanding of what is possible, you will feel confident in using the equipment in unusual and challenging ways and make your product stand out as an original work.

This chapter focuses on developing your knowledge of the **pre-production** process undertaken as you plan a media product. It also provides a range of activities designed to develop production skills that will help you to explore the capabilities of the equipment you will be using as you move into the production and **post-production** stages of your project work.

# Generating ideas

Media productions can, and do, reach global audiences. The meanings those audiences attribute to or take from media products should not be taken lightly, as they have the potential to develop our understanding of who we are and the life we choose.

Media studies is about the interrelationship between communication, information and self-expression. We produce something in order to convey a message to someone else. We select and use different forms of media to communicate.

When starting a major production, you need an idea. Ideas can come from anywhere: a friend's confession, a piece of music, a newspaper article or a childhood memory. Some people open a dictionary and randomly pick a word to explore. Consider the terms 'adaptation', 'rent', 'republic' and 'snatch'. Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel's first film *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) was the recreation of a dream.

Many great productions have been inspired simply by a desire to test the boundaries of the equipment. Technical exercises often set off a flow of creative ideas. For example, the idea to make *Run Lola Run* (1999) was inspired by a desire to create a feature film from a 20-minute short story.

Robert McKee, the famous American script lecturer who was portrayed in the film *Adaptation* (2003), uses the term 'controlling idea' as that which:

... shapes the writer's strategic choices ... toward what is appropriate or inappropriate in your story, toward what is expressive of your Controlling Idea and may be kept versus what is irrelevant to it and must be cut ... The more beautifully you shape your work around one clear idea the more meanings audiences will discover ... Conversely the more ideas you try to pack into a story the more they implode upon themselves, until the film collapses into a rubble of tangential notions, saying nothing.

Robert McKee 1999, p.115

## Choosing your subject matter

**Productions are never objective or neutral.**

The creator selects the subject matter to begin with. Details are selected or highlighted, the product edited and framed. Some basic '**gatekeeping**' activities are indulged in, in order to select or omit certain aspects in the creation.

**Productions are statements of one kind or another.**

Your idea and how you present it is influenced by who you are, your knowledge, background and experience. Select an idea that is right for you. In the course of making any media production you are likely to become frustrated with the work. You and your idea will be stuck together for a long time, so you need to make sure that you select an idea that you are passionate about.

## Learning activities

### *Ideas*

- 1 In relation to your own project, write down five ideas or goals.
- 2 Show them to the person on your left and together select the best two. When selecting them, consider the vision behind the idea. Is it specific or general? Will it make an interesting topic? Are you interested in the topic. Will it grab the interest of others?
- 3 Write five topics, issues or images that relate to your two ideas. Explain in detail what interests you about these topics, issues or images that make up your ideas.
- 4 Show them to the person on your right, and select the best idea of the two.
- 5 Write a single sentence that describes your controlling idea, explaining how your production will present this idea.

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*'Something happened on the Avenue of Eternal Peace at noon on Monday that is going to make a lot of people think about the meaning of courage.'*  
Trevor Watson, 1990.

*As you develop your controlling idea, consider the significance that selection of detail plays in shaping meaning, and influencing values and attitudes. This image of a man defying the Chinese military is clearly a strong statement against the atrocities committed in Tiananmen Square, in Beijing, China.*

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# Intention

Media production is about communication, so you need to be very clear about what you aim to communicate.

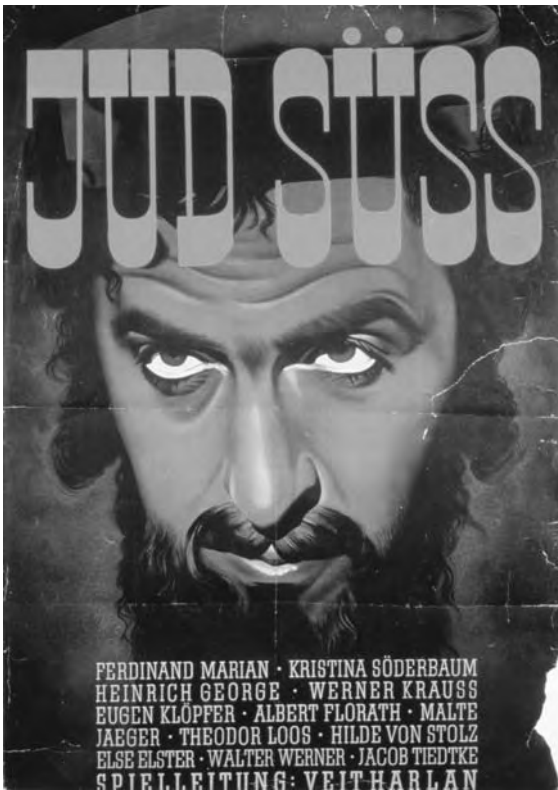
What is your message and what is the intended effect of this message?

Your production will have varying effects on an audience. Not all people see or understand media texts in the same way. Young versus old, rich versus poor, city versus country, minority ethnic groups and indigenous as well as mainstream groups bring different experiences when examining media texts.

During World War Two, Josef Goebbels, in charge of Nazi propaganda in Adolf Hitler's

Germany, used this tactic to numb the German public. He ordered the production of lots and lots of escapist media. One of his favourite films was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). It has been argued that this type of fantasy film was used to numb the German population into submission. The films stimulated little political debate; on the contrary, they encouraged escapism. German audiences at the time were actively encouraged to go to the cinema, forget the war and relax.

Hitler had other ideas about how best to control the thoughts of the German population. He oversaw the creation of *The Eternal Jew* (1941), a film in which Jewish people were directly compared with rats. Goebbels did not believe this type of film would work, as it was too obviously racist. It gave the audience room to recoil from such systematic hatred and form their own views. Goebbels determined that film propaganda should not overtly attack the enemy, but rather should subliminally reinforce existing prejudices. In the film *Jud Suss* (1940), Goebbels created a tale from an earlier period in German history, in which a wealthy Jewish man rapes a German woman, tortures her husband and is eventually caught and put to death. All of the Nazi guards who worked at Auschwitz and other concentration camps were ordered to go see the film.



This image from the film *Jud Süss* (1940) was used by the Nazis to advertise their message to the German public.



Lola in the feature film *Run Lola Run* (1999)

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The photo released by the Government and presented to the Australian people to support claims about children being thrown overboard. The shot has been framed or cropped in such a way as to obscure from view the sinking boat from which the children were escaping.

## Your production may open the eyes of others to an issue that you are passionate about.

It may reinforce values and/or challenge them. Consider what it is that you want to say to your audience. Are you hoping for any particular reaction from your audience? If so, what outcome or reaction are you hoping for? The answers to these questions should be in the back of your mind as you plan your production, influencing every decision you make.

Intentions may also be linked to emotions or the **genre** of your production. For example:

The intention of this film, *Run Lola Run* is to entertain my audience with an action-packed story that essentially details three possible solutions as to how Lola, an unconventional, wild red-head, can use 20 minutes to save her boyfriend, Manni. I would like the audience to develop its appreciation of my heroine as she runs against time. After seeing this film, my audience will hopefully appreciate the way in which simple events can change the course of their lives.

Or

In his *Quarterly Essay*, Mungo MacCallum argues that the Prime Minister, John Howard, and his senior ministers in the Liberal Government used the now famous ‘children overboard’ photos in an attempt to influence the voting public in the lead-up to the 2001 Federal election. Just two days after Mr Howard called an election, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock announced that “disturbingly, a number of children have been thrown overboard ... I regard this as one of the most disturbing practices I’ve come across. It was clearly planned and premeditated.” (MacCallum 2002 p. 57).



The sinking boat from which the children were escaping.

Prime Minister Howard supported the party line the next day on the Alan Jones radio program: “Quite frankly, Alan, I don’t want in this country people who are prepared, if those reports are true, to throw their children overboard. And that kind of emotional blackmail is very distressing” (MacCallum 2002 p. 57).

MacCallum argues that “... no children had in fact been thrown overboard; they had been held up over the rail by frantic parents pleading for rescue as the boat they were on threatened to capsize. What the photos in fact showed was people being rescued as the boat was sinking ... the Prime Minister [was] grinning with delight as he spoke of the awfulness of the boat people ... honesty, ethics and morality—even the simple truth of the matter—were no longer of primary or even secondary importance. All that mattered were the votes” (MacCallum 2002 pp. 57–59).

## Learning activities

### Intention

- 1 Write a statement that outlines the intention behind the Government’s release of the cropped image of children being thrown overboard that does not include the boat in the background. Try to explain the purpose, impact and outcome that was hoped for by releasing this image.
- 2 In the previous section you developed a controlling idea for your major production. Now you should write a statement of intention and be sure to include information on the purpose, impact and outcome you are hoping for.

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# Audience

An **audience** is “an assembly of hearers or spectators, the persons reached by a book, radio broadcast etc.” (*The Penguin Macquarie Dictionary* p. 32). Your audience selection will be partially determined by your intention. Reaching that audience, entertaining and holding it for the duration of your production is what matters, and will inevitably determine how your work is judged.

Your chosen audience will have an impact on all your production decisions, choice of music, image selection, typography and on your script, or story.

“*Story is about respect, not disdain, for the audience. When talented people write badly it’s generally for one of two reasons: Either they’re blinded by an idea they feel compelled to prove or they’re driven by an emotion they must express. When talented people write well, it’s generally for this reason: They’re moved by a desire to touch the audience.*”

Robert McKee, 1999 p.7

## Defining your audience

Too often, students define their audiences using the simple formula of age and sex. For example, ‘My audience for this skateboard movie is young boys’. While this is a start, it does not provide a clear idea about the intended audience. Consider that this example actually includes 5-year-old boys living in slum conditions in South Africa and young Palestinian boys living in a war zone. You need to be much more specific when defining your audience. If you fail to understand your audience or you target the wrong audience, your intention may be lost on them. Moreover, if you are trying to sell a product, your audience may not respond. Advertising companies spend a fortune trying to understand the likes and dislikes of different audiences.

Once you have selected your audience, be specific and consider the group’s interests, attitudes, expectations and knowledge about the topic. Consider culture, class and political persuasion. If you discover that your idea and intention are relevant to a larger audience, or that more people like your idea than you thought, great. You should focus your energy on what your target audience thinks and desires. So define your target audience!

Young people come in many shapes and sizes, so when you are trying to define your audience, consider and explain how ‘skaters’ are a very different breed from ‘socialists’. Audience explanations must be specific and be relevant to that cohort. For example:

My audience for this ‘Skate Movie’ is young 14–17-year-old boys who love to ride skateboards. This particular group has a negative attitude toward school, and wag without fear. They can be found down at the local bowl during the day, practising their tricks. If they were to watch a skate movie they would expect to see many cool images of tricks, with still images showing how to do them. All images would need to have actors wearing the right style of baggy shorts and caps. They would expect the text used in titles to include abbreviations such as ‘SK8’ (for ‘skate’) and the appropriate music to be timed to the action. My audience essentially lives to skate, so I would expect them to watch my movie on a video/DVD one rainy day.



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Other audience explanations may consider the audience's culture, class and political persuasion.

For example:

The audience for my print advertisements on 'Disrupting School Elections' is people from our school community who think the School Captain position is an elitist and egotistical competition between self-serving egomaniacs. The audience would be interested in the writings of Germaine Greer and would value notions of equality and the principles of socialism. Catchy text would be used to inspire the audience, who would understand the existing political system that operates, and would consider this to be a sham. The audience would be senior students who abhor the school's attempts to pretend that students have a say by rigging elections via private interviews and installing pompous puppets. The advertisements, which I will place around the school, will hopefully motivate my audience to speak out and demand fair elections!

## Learning activities

### *Audience*

- 1 Form small groups and write down a short list of 3–4 different audiences. Discuss and identify films that you believe have been made to target these audiences. Explain what led you to these findings.
- 2 In the previous section you defined and selected your idea and intention. Using this information as a starting point, write as many things as you can that you know about your audience. What do they expect? What are their attitudes towards your idea?

# Marketing and your product

Once you have selected and defined your audience, it is equally important to question the marketing drive which demands that products be made for specific audiences. The media are often driven by a desire to sell. It is, after all, a business. The ability of a media product to capture an audience is far too often the measure of a particular media product's worth. Each year we are bombarded with mass marketing of the latest American blockbuster film; in some cases more money is spent on the advertising campaigns than on the actual films. If the film draws the audience into the cinema, or if a newspaper or magazine sells to a wide audience, it is valued and considered a success. The bottom line is: Will the media product grab an audience and make money? It's that simple.

In the 1560s, Pieter Bruegel, the realist painter, was considered by many to be foolish. Bruegel created art not for profit, but for pleasure. He painted the peasants, the common folk, their children and disabled people. Artists in this period in history could make a decent living by painting portraits of the rich. Bruegel was true to his own sense of art and to his values. Bruegel's work, which is now famous throughout the world for its brilliant realism, was not recognised or valued until after his death, and so he lived and died a poor man.

Try to make a product that you will be proud to call your own. It doesn't matter if your product is made for an audience that may purchase it, or if it is made for your favourite uncle. Have some fun when you select your audience.

**Remember the freedom that comes from making a product that is not driven by a desire to make a profit.**

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The Peasant Dance provides an example of Pieter Bruegel's work. Bruegel visited small villages to study his models. He dressed in common clothes and attended weddings and celebrations with gifts, as though he were one of the locals. He then painted these people at work and play. In this example it is not difficult to imagine the artist observing the scene while quietly sipping a beer among the crowd.

## Specifications

Specifications can be thought of as the 'recipe ingredients', or guidelines, of your media form.

For example, video production specifications include items such as lighting and music. In multimedia, the specifications include items such as interactivity and typography. Your task is to master these specifications and to manipulate them within your production so that your audience is engaged and the intention of your piece is communicated effectively.

The more you manipulate the specifications, the more individual and distinctive your production will become. On the following page is a list of the production forms, adapted from the VCE Study Design for Media (see the website at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au) for further information). Note that intention and audience appear in every category. These are our starting points as we begin our exercises in production.

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## FILM/VIDEO



- Genre
- Storyline
- Audience
- Intention
- Dialogue or interview questions
- Location
- Camera
- Editing
- Lighting
- Sound
- Titles

## MULTIMEDIA



- Format or style
- Intention
- Audience
- Presentation or exhibition
- Content and sequencing
- Functionality and/or interactivity
- Page design
- Images and graphic elements—photographs, tables, buttons, hotspots, links
- Typography

## PHOTOGRAPHY



- Method of presentation and exhibition
- Style
- Subject(s) and/or topic
- Intention
- Audience
- Location
- Lighting
- Composition
- Techniques—selective focus, filtration, manipulation of contrast, use of specialty papers, tone, colour, typography

## PRINT



- Style and/or genre
- Content
- Audience
- Intention
- Presentation
- Visual materials—photographs, illustrations, graphics
- Layout
- Typography
- Advertising

## RADIO/AUDIO



- Style
- Storyline
- Intention
- Audience
- Dialogue or interview questions
- Editing
- Setting
- Music and/or sound effects

# Media skills

In the following activities you will complete at least two production exercises and can choose to work in the specialist areas of video, multimedia, photography, print, radio or a product that crosses the boundaries between the media forms described above.

## Selecting your medium

When selecting your media form, consider the specifications or characteristics of this form. It is highly recommended that you work in only one media form throughout this unit of work, as the skills and knowledge gained will benefit your major production.

While completing the media skills exercises in your specialist area of production, your goal should be to test the limits of the equipment you have available to you.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, as the more mistakes you make, the more you will learn. If you don't make any mistakes then you are probably not trying hard enough! Remember, the person doing it soon passes the person who says it can't be done.

As you work on your media skills exercises, keep in mind your major production design plan so that you can actively incorporate new ideas about how the equipment works. If you have done a good job these new skills will help you to develop the individual and distinctive qualities of your productions.

Hopefully, you will have discovered that the camera angles and other production elements can be manipulated to create a range of moods communicating the student's attitude or feelings. For example, a low-angle shot looking up is often used to reinforce one character's power over another. Don't assume that audiences understand the actors' emotions. Instead, you must carefully control and manipulate the specifications so that you can communicate meaning effectively to the audience. This is the fundamental role of a director.

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# Media skills

## Case study

Using video production as an example, we are going to create a scary scene from a movie. Our intention (to frighten the audience) will be assisted by the use of certain video specifications.

### Intention

The intention is to create a short horror film, using the concept of fear. I intend to emphasise how powerful and scary a school principal can be when telling off rebellious students. The purpose is to frighten my audience into a submissive state. The outcome I am anticipating is that my intended audience will be too frightened to cause any trouble.

### Audience

My audience is a group of Grade 6 students who are about to enter secondary school. These students have come from a primary school setting which has very little discipline, and so they are an unruly bunch. They would be expecting secondary school to be similar, and thus have no real knowledge of this new environment.

## Camera: framing position and movement

In order to emphasise the power that the school principal has over students, I will begin with a close-up shot of the principal's shoes as he walks into the room. I will then cut to a very low angle, looking upwards to emphasise his height. As the principal begins to yell, I will move in for another close-up to accentuate the all-consuming nature of the interaction.

### Lighting

The lighting in the hallway will be bright, so that when the principal enters the room his face will be silhouetted and dark. A large, imposing silhouette is all that the student will see. As the principal moves around the student, his face will move in and out of light, developing a mood of anxiety and confusion. As he begins to yell at the student, the principal's face will be lit from below, his eyes dissolving into dark ominous shadows, adding to the audience's sense of fear.

### Music/sound effects

The principal will be accompanied by the **diegetic** sound of his heavy breathing and the stomp, stomp, stomp of his shoes on the hard floorboards. Through an open window, a whistling wind will resonate.

## Learning activity

### Media skills case study Part A

- 1 Your task is to demonstrate how you could use the specifications, camera, music and lighting to inform the audience that the intimidating principal does not frighten the student character. In the plan above, the principal is meant to be scary. However, if we change the age of the actor playing the student to 17 years old, and direct the film to a senior audience, consider how the film's intention can be manipulated and changed altogether.
- 2 First, consider how you want to represent the student. Then plan how you will utilise the specifications to convey the student's attitude towards the principal.
- 3 Fill in the remaining two storyboards on the next page, completing the entire scene. Remember to show clearly how you have manipulated camera, music and lighting.
- 4 Explain your intention, audience and how you have employed the three specifications mentioned above to convey a new meaning to your audience.
- 5 Compare your work with others', to see the many and varied possibilities.

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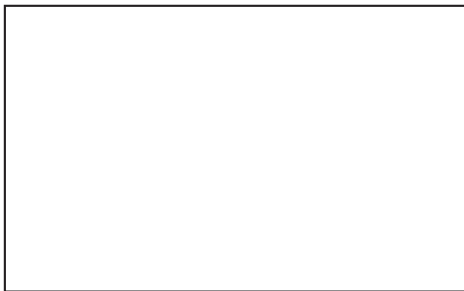
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AUDIO/SOUND EFFECTS

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PAGE:

*sample pages  
only*

As you can see in my completed example (left), the specifications have all been considered and manipulated in order to convey my message. The *camera* is used to create a wide angle shot that reveals to my audience how relaxed the student is. His feet on the desk and headphones add to the carefree attitude I am trying to depict. The close up of the student's face is then shown, to demonstrate that he has noticed the imposing figure of the principal and yet he does not care. On the contrary, his facial expression is not one of fear but one of contempt for authority.

Generally speaking, in all shots of people, whether angled, wide, mid-shot or close up, the eyes should appear two-thirds up the screen so as to balance the image while providing a little head room—but not too much.

*Lighting* is used subtly across the right half of the student's face to suggest that there is a dark side to this boy. Upon noticing the principal, the student decides to adjust the volume of his head set. When he turns up the volume, the diegetic *music* coming out of the headphones is so loud that the principal can hear its pulsating beat, albeit faintly. The music, combined with a shadow on the student's face and the close-up revealing his feelings of contempt, complete the overall impression that he really doesn't care about the power the principal may have over him.

## Limitations and possibilities

**When considering weaknesses (limitations and possibilities), it is important to distinguish between human error and a weakness in a piece of equipment.**

If one of your tripod legs is too low and your landscape image is on an angle, then the problem is you, not the tripod. If, however, you want to see the faces of a couple kissing with the sun setting behind them, the camera's limitations would mean that the couple will be silhouetted by the back-light effect from the sun. What can you do about this real limitation? By using another specification such as light, you may be able to set up a new light or reflector board to bounce back light onto the faces of your kissing couple.

## Learning activities

### *Media skills case study Part B*

If you were to produce the production outlined in part A, you would encounter a number of technical weaknesses or limitations in the equipment. I have listed a few of them below. Your task is to try to film this sequence and, as you do, to try and find technical solutions to the problems listed. Be sure to write down your solutions to the problems, so that you will be able to demonstrate your knowledge of the specification's strengths and weaknesses.

- 1 The video recording of the principal's footsteps as he entered the room was too low, and hence my desired effect of the STOMP, STOMP, STOMP, was lost. What technical solution can I use to fix the problem?
- 2 The student turned up his walkman in the wide shot, and it is assumed that the principal can now hear the music. However, when filming, the camera microphone was too far away to hear the music. Is there another specification I could use to help solve this problem? Explain.
- 3 In the wide shot, the student is positioned with his feet on the desk in the left-hand corner of the frame. When I set up to film this, the camera would not hold focus on the student. Rather, it automatically focused on the wall behind him. How can I stop this happening?
- 4 In the close up of the principal, I made the room really dark so I could manipulate the lighting in order to make him look scarier. And yet, the image I captured was terrible and the video camera did not cope well with the low lighting, resulting in picture drop out and pixilation. How can I manipulate the light and the camera to solve this problem?

**sample pages  
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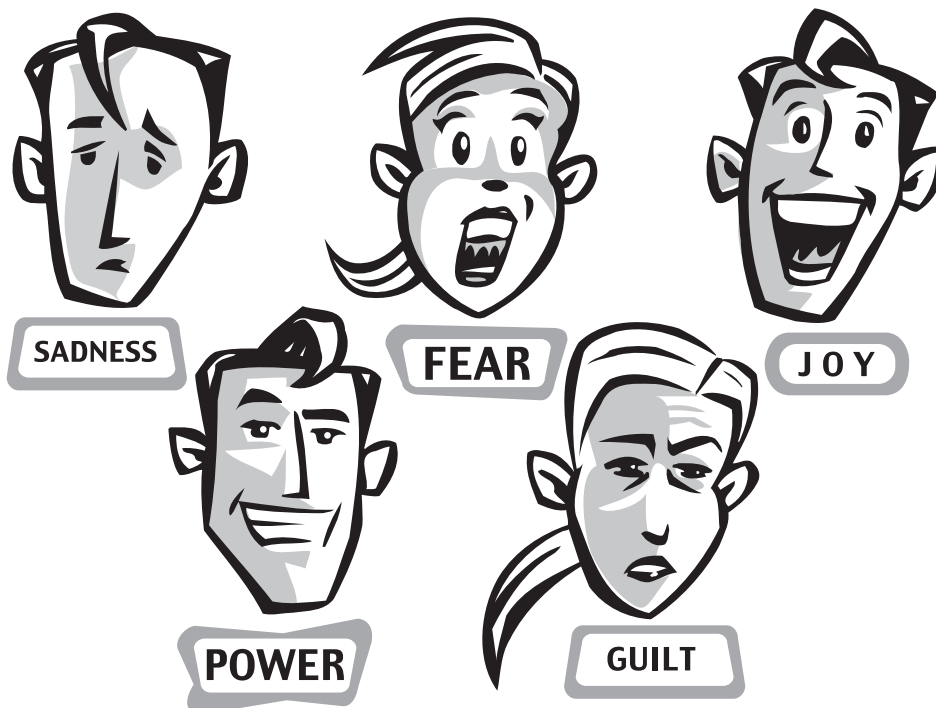
## Media skills exercise 1

Pick one medium/area of study.

- 1 Video** Imagine for a minute that you have just completed a feature-length script for a horror movie and you desperately need funding to film it. You decide to create a 30-second advertisement to present to producers, in the hope that they will sponsor the creation of your feature film. Your task is to plan and film a short advertisement promoting this horror movie. Before you start, define your intention. Then select and define your audience. Script and storyboard the production plan. In your plan, describe the appropriate application of the following specifications: camera (position and movement), lighting and sound effects. Produce the advertisement and provide details on the strengths, weaknesses and solutions encountered during its production.
- 2 Multimedia** Your cousin has just bought a shabby old holiday house and wants your help to create a webpage that she can use to rent it out. Your task is to plan and build a front page with one link, promoting this holiday house to prospective renters. Before you start, define your intention. Select and define your audience. Sketch a rough plan that provides a clear insight into what the site will include and how the site will work. Describe how you will apply the following specifications: content, typography and images and graphical elements such as photographs, tables, buttons, hotspots and links. Produce the webpage and provide detail about the strengths, weaknesses and solutions encountered during its production.
- 3 Photography** Your mum has asked you to help her deal with a problem she is having with your little brother. He hates school. Your assignment is to plan and photograph some images of passionate teachers inspiring students with their teaching and classroom activities. While the images are supposed to look like snaps of real activities, you are going to set up portrait-like images. Your task is to plan, photograph and develop two images. Before you start, define your intention and your audience. Sketch the images you are planning to photograph, identifying and explaining how you plan to use the following specifications: composition, lighting and subjects. Produce the photographs and provide details about the strengths, weaknesses and solutions encountered during their production.
- 4 Print** The video students in your class are planning to film a short advertisement promoting a horror movie. Your task is to discover as much as you can about this movie and take a photo or two on the film set. Using this information, create a magazine page that reviews the film. Define your intention and your audience. Sketch the page layout, showing title, image, advertising, text and the overall layout. Identify and explain how you plan to use the following specifications, visual materials and typography. Produce the magazine pages and provide details about the strengths, weaknesses and solutions encountered during its production.
- 5 Radio** Imagine that you run an advertising company, and a school principal approaches you to help promote her school. She needs more students and doesn't care who they are. Your task is to plan and create a short radio advertisement that will encourage potential students to think that this school is an awesome, radically different place. Define your intention and audience. Script the production. In your plan, consider the appropriate application of the following specifications: dialogue, narration or interview questions, location and/or setting and sound effects. Produce the radio advertisement and provide details about the strengths, weaknesses and solutions encountered during its production.

## Media skills exercise 2

- 1 Select your medium.
  - 2 What emotions or concepts do you want to communicate to your audience?  
For example, power, sadness, fear, revenge, evil, joy, love, isolation, remorse or romance.  
Select one or create your own.
  - 3 Describe the intention and the audience of your piece in 100 words.
  - 4 Select two specifications that will best help you to convey your selected concept to your intended audience. Explain in 100–300 words how you plan to use the specifications to communicate meaning.
  - 5 Produce a project proposal, script or sketches that outline how the two specifications will be used to express your concept.
- Video and radio students should script or storyboard a short outline for an advertisement.
  - Multimedia and print students should sketch a plan for one advertisement or the first page of a production.
  - Photography students should provide two sketches for two photos.
- 6 Now produce a section of your plan (or the whole plan if it is a short one) in the medium you have chosen; for example, a video, photographs etc.
  - 7 Document two limitations of the equipment you are using, and outline one solution for one of these problems in 100–300 words.



## LIMITATIONS

### Image drop-out or Pixilation

Using digital cameras in poor light may cause picture drop-out so that the pixels become 'block-like' and distort the image.

### Blurred images

Moving subjects often blur.

### Silhouetted images

If a subject is back-lit, which often happens when standing in front of a window, the light from outside may cause the subject to silhouette.

### Scanned images pixilate

Once an image is scanned and stretched onto a page, it may break up and pixilate.

### Scanned images are not sharp

Flat bed scanners are often avoided in the industry, as they do not scan images with enough dots per inch, creating a blurred, soft edge to images. If you were to enlarge one of these pictures for a billboard poster, the quality would be seriously compromised.

### Web images pixilate when stretched

Most web images are low resolution (72 dots per square inch, or dpi) to ensure that they can be quickly downloaded. If these images are imported into a print production, where the industry standard is 300dpi, they often break up and pixilate.

### Printing problems with bright colours

Computer screens provide an endless selection of colours, known as RGB (red, green and blue). However, some of these colours will not look the same on the page as they do on the screen.

### Low sound quality

Some video cameras and microphones have one audio input, which is known as 'mono sound', meaning 'one layer'. Others have stereo sound-capture qualities. 'Stereo' means 'multiple layers of sound'. If you accidentally use a mono cable or plug a mono microphone into a stereo camera, you will lower the quality of your captured sound and, in some, instances capture a background hum or hiss.

## SOLUTIONS

### Aperture and lighting

Fill the location with more light and then manually adjust the aperture control, reducing the amount of light coming into the camera. The resultant effect will be a good, dark image without the **pixilation**.

### Shorter exposure time or tracking

Avoid panning your camera too quickly, or track the camera and slow down the subjects' movement. You can then speed the action up later in the editing phase, if you like. With film cameras, use a shorter exposure time and faster film.

### Manipulate the light

The best solution here is to simply close the curtain or move the subject so that the light source is coming from behind the camera, falling on to the subject. If this is not possible, set up an additional light source to throw light onto your subject, or use a reflector board to bounce back the light to the subject.

### Scan at a higher resolution

Most scanning set ups offer a range of possible rates at which you can scan your images. If your images are pixilating when you stretch them, then you most likely have not scanned them at a high enough resolution.

### Drum scanning

A drum scanner rapidly rotates a photo many times around a scanning device, capturing a much finer, more detailed image. (A good solution, but very expensive.)

### Keep them small

Keep these images small on the page, or try to find the original and scan it at a high-enough resolution.

### Control your colour options

In your design program, set your colour palette to CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow and black). These are the print output options, and hence the colours you select and see on the screen will be much the same when printed.

### Stick with one sound format

Use one format and associated equipment. If it is a mono capturing device that you own, then use only mono cables and mono microphones. If it is stereo, then use stereo equipment. Note: It is possible to load your mono sound into a stereo editing suite and add new tracks of sound, but when you export this onto your mono capturing device, the sound will be 'crunched down' onto the one track.

## LIMITATIONS

### Poor sound quality

While poor sound quality in videos will lower the standard of your production, in radio programs it will destroy the work. Poor sound is more often than not caused by people selecting the wrong microphone for the job. Imagine for a minute that you are in a rainforest, searching for gorillas. In this environment you may need to use a range of microphones to collect the following sounds:

- (a) Talking in a windy environment
- (b) The ambient noise of the rainforest
- (c) A grunting gorilla in the distance
- (d) A low whisper
- (e) A loud scream
- (f) Talking while walking.



*The gorilla is collecting ambient noise. He is holding an omni directional microphone and the sound waves pictured demonstrate the wide arc from which sounds are captured. The man is holding a boom pole with a directional microphone attached. The sound waves pictured demonstrate the capability of this particular microphone to focus on a specific area from which to collect sound.*

**Note:** While this section identifies a number of common problems, limitations and solutions related to the five specialist production areas, it is by no means an exhaustive list. There may be many alternative solutions to each problem.

## SOLUTIONS

### Specific microphone strengths

#### (a) Talking in a windy environment

Wind may buffet the camera microphone, and hence damage the sound quality. Wind may also effect the sound waves from reaching the microphone. In this situation, pin a lapel microphone to the actor, who can turn their back on the wind by using their body as a buffer, and protect the sound quality.

#### (b) The ambient noise of the rainforest

An 'omni directional' microphone is one that collects sound from 'all' directions in a balanced way. In this setting an omni directional microphone will evenly gather the sound of the river's water at your feet and the birds in the trees above.

#### (c) A grunting gorilla in the distance

Most microphones attached to cameras are 'directional'. That is, they gather sound waves from the specific location in which they are directed. It is common to attach directional microphones to boom poles and follow the talking actors as they move around a crowded room. Point the microphone in the direction of the sound you desire.

#### (d) A low whisper

Unfortunately, even a very good directional microphone attached to a boom pole may not pick up a faint whisper being filmed in a wide shot. So a small radio lapel microphone would be the best way to get clear sound from close to the source. The radio lapel microphone is hidden in the actor's shirt and so it cannot be seen by the audience. It sends a sound signal back to the camera's receiver.

#### (e) A loud scream

Most microphones do not cope with really loud noise. When you turn up your stereo full blast, the sound breaks up as you reach or pass the capacity of your system. The solution is to turn the directional microphone away from the loud sound so that you receive only its bounce, not the full force of the sound wave.

#### (f) Talking while walking

The obvious choice here would be a radio lapel microphone, and yet they too have their limitations. The radio lapel microphone is very sensitive to movement, and any rubbing against clothing will damage the sound quality. Attach a directional microphone to a boom pole to track a character walking and talking.

# Designing the production plan

Most media productions are collaborative, so it is essential that communication between the creator and those called on to assist with the production, is clear and consistent. Your production team and teacher need to be able to understand what you are trying to do. Many presentation styles are used to communicate the **codes and conventions** of different production areas. In this unit you will learn how to structure your thoughts and ideas for your proposed productions so that others can understand your production plan and what it is that you are trying to create.

On completion of this unit, you should prepare a media production design plan, incorporating specifications appropriate for your chosen media product. The specifications, problems and solutions you discovered in the previous section should contribute towards your media production design plan. Submitting a media production design plan before you start work on the media product is the best way to demonstrate that you know exactly what it is that you want to do. It will also help you to organise and manage the production.

## Video/animation production planning



A video production is considered to be a short audiovisual sequence (film or video),

in the narrative, documentary or experimental format, or it could be an advertisement, a music video or a current affairs segment. An animation can take any form: clay, digital, stop motion, drawn or cell animation.

## Script

Your starting point is the story you want to tell. The script is one of the formal structures you will use to help plan and communicate your story. Try to complete many drafts as early as you can—the quicker you complete them, the more tips and advice you will receive to help you develop your story. Two main scripting styles are presented on pages 125 and 126. The first example, titled 'Cow Spottin!', is most commonly used in video/animation narratives, while the second example, titled 'Kurni', is most commonly used in documentary productions.

*sample pages  
only*

## COW SPOTTIN!

### *Scene 1 Hill side Ext Day*

*A massive, lone black bull stands on the side of a bald hillside, contemplating life. It looks down at its hooves and then up at the hilltop.*

**Bull** (voice-over)

Check out my hooves, look at my horns.  
I'm going to climb up to the top of this mountain and roar!  
Let all these little cows know that GOD is in the house.

*The bull begins to stomp his way up the hill. He is self-assured and full of confidence.*

### *Scene 2 Hill top Ext Day*

*As the bull reaches the top of the mountain, he looks around at the world that he rules over. He inhales a long steady deep breath and ...*

**Bull** (voice-over)

MIAOWww?

*The huge black bull is dumbfounded. He blinks once or twice and, feeling rather embarrassed, he quickly looks left then right.*

**Bull** (voice-over)

What the?!

**Bull** (voice-over)

mo

*Fade to black.*

### Script structure

The video/animation narrative script structure has been designed to cater to the needs of a range of people involved in the production. The scene number, location and time of day assist the **producer** in planning the filming. If, for example, we have two scenes at one location, we may decide to skip ahead in the script and film them on the same day. This will save time, as we will not have to return to this location. If a weather forecast indicates that a thunderstorm is on its way, we may choose to shoot our Int (Interior) scenes ahead of our Ext (Exterior) scenes. This principle also applies to our Day and/or Night scenes.

The actor's dialogue is centred and identified by the character's name. This allows actors to scan through the script for their dialogue, so they can learn it in advance of the filming. The actions explained in the script are mainly for the **director** and camera operator to plan for in the storyboard.

**sample pages  
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## KURNI Scene 8

| <i>SHOT</i> | <i>Vision</i>  | <i>Sound</i>   |
|-------------|--|--|
| 65          | McMillan writes in his diary.  | (V.O.) The men fired at will, wounding many of the blacks.   |
| 66          | Whites reload and  | Guns reloading.  |
| 67          | charge out of the hut.   |  |
| 68          | Painting of a stand-off ...  | Gunshots<br><br>Aboriginal war cries.  |
| 69          | A wide shot of the isolated hut.   | Silence falls.   |
| 70          | Paintings of dead Aborigines   | <i>(V.O.) These skirmishes led to more killings and subsequent reprisals. The preceding war saw a massive decline of the Kurnai Aborigines from 3000 in 1839 to 222 counted in 1860.</i> |
| 71          | and photos of Aborigines in chains will accompany the narrator's voice-over. |  |

The documentary script layout helps to combine vision and sound, clearly indicating what the audience will see and hear. The director plans the storyboard, based on the visual information. The editor uses this script to put the whole production together after filming. The actors and the narrator learn their lines, which are found in the sound section. Sound effects (SFX) are also noted in the script.

Some documentary scripts may be a little less structured if they include, for example, interviews. You probably would not know the full details of answers to your questions. In this instance you should write your questions in the sound column. Your research should provide you with some tips as to what the answers will be, but understandably you will not be able to predict the detail of some answers.

### Script read-through

After you have prepared a script, organise a script read-through. This is a fantastic way to work with the actors in developing the characters, and to see whether the actors are able to act. Most importantly, it helps to check the quality of the scripted dialogue. Do this on location, as it will help you and your crew to understand the plan. You may also discover that this helps you develop creative ideas and to manage the shoot. By visiting the location with your actors, you can start to think about your shots and what you would like to frame in them. You may discover that your location has direct sunlight streaming into it in the afternoon. A walk-through with the actors and crew will save you much time while filming, as people will come to understand where they are meant to be in relation to the script.

Character profiles are often created to assist the actors in understanding their role. Profiles may include character histories and may help you to design the intended mood for an actor. Consider how classic narrative elements such as props and locations work to develop the audience's understanding of character.

### Story boarding

In preparing your storyboards, consider: shot length, type, angle, lighting, dialogue, pace, emotion. Consider how you could set up the background of your location to provide character information. In documentary interviews, position your character on the left or third right of the frame, filling the background with props that link and develop your audience's understanding of your subject.

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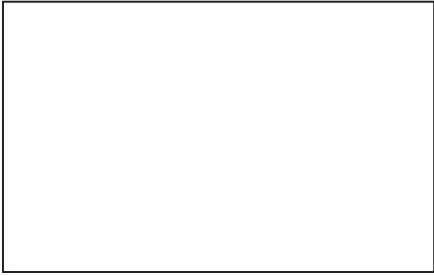
# The storyboard, like the script, has many helpful features.

## Picture box

First and foremost is the picture box, in which you sketch the image and demonstrate how you would like to frame it. Do not draw stick figures, as they do not reflect real-life framing. If the action is moving and you require the camera to follow the action, then draw an arrow on the side of the box in the direction you want the camera to pan.

## Audio and sound effects

Audio and sound-effects information should be short cues, not necessarily the whole speech from the script; for example, 'Audio: Jack argues with Jill. FX: loud slap'.

|  |              |                            |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|
|  | SHOT DETAILS | AUDIO/SOUND EFFECTS        |
|  | _____        | _____                      |
|  | _____        | _____                      |
|  | _____        | _____                      |
|  | _____        | _____                      |
|  | _____        | _____                      |
| SHOT: <input type="text"/>   |              | PAGE: <input type="text"/> |

## Shot

The small box under the picture box is used to indicate your shooting order. That is the logical order in which you will film each sequence. For example, if you have a couple of shots that you want to edit together of two people talking to each other, then you may choose to film all of the shots and reactions of one person, then turn the camera around and film the other person. The shot list explains the filming order; the picture box shows the edit order.

## Shot details

A brief description of what will happen in the shot ('In this wide shot, Jack will climb up the hill'); and the shot type (cu = close up, ms = mid-shot, ws = wide shot, high angle or low angle). This will help others understand the shot, particularly if you cannot draw it.

## Page

Storyboard page number

**sample pages  
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SHOT:

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SHOT:

SHOT DETAILS

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AUDIO/SOUND EFFECTS

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AUDIO/SOUND EFFECTS

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## Lists

Compile a few organisational checklists to assist you with the management and organisation of your production. These should include dates for production meetings and rehearsals, a list of all of your production equipment, production dates with a break-down of the props, actors and crew needed, at what times of the day. Finally, outline your editing schedule, allowing time for you to develop your sound track and to add titles.

## Multimedia



A multimedia production can be a webpage, CD-ROM, interactive CD or DVD.

## Flowchart

As a basic starting point in planning your multimedia product, design a flowchart that demonstrates how you plan to create the product and how it is to be navigated. The 'family tree' webpage design looks just like a family tree, and each level represents a new page of your information, with links to the next page and so on.

This example organises the pages in an ordered, linear manner, which is acceptable but not compulsory. The beauty of multimedia design is its flexibility, which allows for all kinds of creative design structures. You may use the information in a more individual and distinctive way if you wish. The 'family tree' structure can be abandoned, and hence your product may be non-linear, allowing the user to move sideways, up, down, anywhere. The audience's ability to interact with the text and choose their own journey is one of the main attractions of multimedia and distinguishes it from other media. You may also include audio and video links on pop-up screens or on separate screens. The value of

planning is that it allows you to explore your design before you go to the trouble of creating it. The plan will also assist you in demonstrating how your product works.

## Keys

Your plan needs to demonstrate clearly your understanding of the design tools used in multimedia products. Following are some suggestions for how you could colour code and thus identify some of the more common tools in your plan. Hyper-links, sometimes known as 'buttons', are used to link your pages. In your plan these should be underlined and blue in colour.

### When designing buttons, consider your product and its intended audience.

They should complement your product and, where possible, provide clues to the user about the next destination. It is important to arrange and place your buttons clearly and logically, as hidden or disguised buttons are not much use. If possible, design buttons that change, animate or produce a sound when the browser passes them.

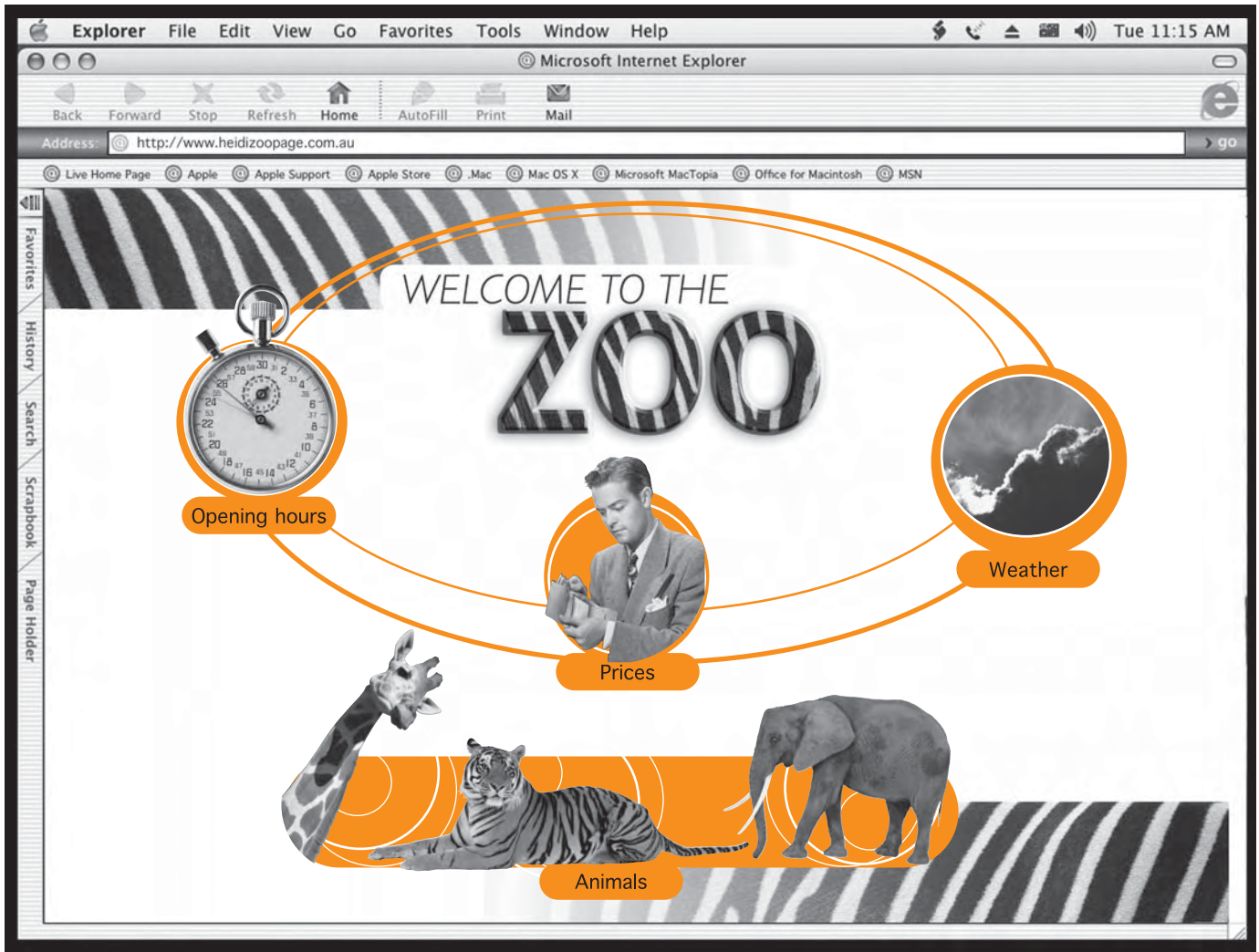
## Links

Links to other (www.) web addresses assist your browsers with their research. Include on your site a list of links; identify these links in your plan by making them green and underlining them. 'Pop-ups' are often used for video images. A pop-up is a new screen that 'pops up' on the front of the screen you are looking at. Pop-ups are used mainly for video, as video can take a while to load up, so a pop-up page for video images can be pushed aside or minimised, allowing your browser to continue searching until the video is ready to view.

## Interactive elements

Multimedia products can offer interactive elements, such as allowing your audience to choose their own journey or creating chat pages on your site for comment and debate. However, most webpages are static, which means that they do not change, unless they are manually changed. Dynamic pages are used to update sites by automatically changing and updating themselves. For example, your local zoo's webpage may have weather information dynamically arranged so that each day it automatically seeks updated information from the Bureau of Meteorology's website and loads this new information into the zoo's weather page.

**sample pages  
only**



sample pages  
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# 'The Zoo' home page



Opening hours



Prices



Weather

List of times

Price information

Self-updating  
weather information



Animals



## Style

Once you have created your basic multimedia flowchart, develop a consistent style by selecting your fonts and colours from the RGB (red, green and blue) colour range available to computer-generated works. Try to be consistent with these choices throughout the plan and the product.

## Sketch

Sketch a large, A4 version of the home page—also known as the 'interface'. This sketch should outline the textual information that your site will contain, as well as the location and design of the buttons you have chosen. From this page, sketch the path one could follow to the linking pages, and provide details of the content.

## Interface

Using a digital-imaging program, create and print the general design of your site's front page, or interface. This will be the place viewers visit as they begin to navigate your webpage. The print will give you an idea of what your finished site will look like.

## Lists

Outline your planned production activities and create a list of due dates.

## Photography

A photography production may take the form of any photographic presentation or series of images suitable for display in a gallery, as a photographic essay, a photomontage, to illustrate a book, or as an advertising sequence. Using wet-process photography, black-and-white and/or colour negatives, it should be processed and printed by the student. Digital images should be photographed or scanned, manipulated and printed by the student.

## Research

Students involved in video productions are at a distinct advantage when it comes to production planning, as they can readily view on television examples of their codes and conventions, and they are able to film literally thousands of images from which they can select and edit their images. Photographers, on the other hand, have to work a lot harder. It is in the process of their research that photographers discover their images.

Before you decide on and plan any images for your production, complete a full exploration of your idea, including how photographers in the past have treated similar concepts and how you could treat it. To begin with, include in your plan samples of images from other photographers who inspire you. This will help you demonstrate what it is that you would like to achieve.



**sample pages  
only**

## Photographing

Shoot around your subject, and shoot a lot of images. Practice photographing your subjects and locations. Experiment in the darkroom, or by using Adobe Photoshop software. Use a roll of colour film and get it professionally developed. Practice lighting setups, different angles, different shutter speeds.

### Find a technique that best suits your intended message, and go with it.

Photography should never be a purely technical exercise. The truly great photographers do not sit back behind their tripod; they move around, pushing to get inside what they are doing, looking for that moment of magic. An opportunistic photographer should treat their subject like a wave, and they should decide when to ride the wave, quickly deciding to go left or right and then commit themselves, allowing for variations as they occur.

**'If you are not getting the shot, you're not getting close enough.'**

Robert Capa

## Sketches

After—and only after—you have taken at least ten practice photographs for every single image you want, draw your A4-sized, detailed sketches. This formal structure will help you to communicate your ideas and to consider how all the images will look together. Write on the side of each image an explanation of how you plan to use the specifications such as lighting. Shading of a character's eyes in a drawing may not necessarily explain that you understand the need to light it from above. A good sketch should not be basic 'stick figures'; it should include the composition of the images, shot type, angle, lighting, emotion and the developing techniques to be used.



Robert Capa's famous 'Death of a Loyalist Soldier' was photographed during the Spanish Civil War. There is a raging debate as to whether or not Capa set up this shot or if, in fact, it was really taken in the heat of battle.

**sample pages  
only**

## Style

This shot will be structured like a well-lit portrait of a normal, happy baby. However, in nature and design the aim is for the image to look like it is from the future, hence all specifications will work together to make this possible. The digitally adjusted eyes are the most obvious element suggesting the futuristic quality of the image, but there are also other factors at work.

## Composition

This image will be photographed low to the ground from the baby's eye level, as you would expect in portraiture. The plan is to frame the baby's eyes two-thirds up the screen, in order to balance the shot and avoid leaving too much empty space above the baby's head. The composition with the baby centred aims to focus the audience's attention on the baby and, most importantly, on the square eyes and large ears.

## Location

The background is empty but for a clean, bright white backdrop which suggests that this baby is from a pure and technically superior future.

## Lighting

The lighting is sharp white light, creating a bright image that is symbolic of the futuristic and cutting-edge products it is advertising.



## Techniques of engagement

By using an otherwise normal-looking baby, the audience will be engaged by the digitally manipulated eyes, which practically jump off the page at the audience, demanding attention. The allusion to the saying 'if you watch too much television your eyes will become square' will also get the audience thinking about the meanings of the image. The large ears work to further develop the understanding that we must evolve to TDK technology.

**sample pages  
only**

## Presentation

Prepare sketches or a written statement that outlines how the images will be framed and how each image fits into the final presentation.

## Lists

Once all of your planning is complete, compile some checklists to demonstrate your organisation and management of the production. These should include all equipment, props, actors, production meetings, research, production and development schedules, and finally your framing or presentation of the finished images.

## Print

A print production can be a magazine, newspaper, booklet, series of posters or a catalogue, or it can be an insert in a magazine or newspaper. The product should be eight to twelve pages or layouts, which should be printed by the student.



While print is a static medium, the finished product is a physical item, and designers should consider the quality and feel of their published products. Consider hard covers, embossing and textures; the way you select and manipulate these design choices will dramatically influence the overall quality of your work.

Before you begin any work on a print production, clearly establish in your own mind the essence of what you are designing. This should determine your whole approach, the style of your product and the priorities in your layout. Do not make the mistake of assuming that graphic design skills are all you will require. Your task in this area of production is far more challenging. The task is visual communication, so you need to consider how you will visually communicate to your audience that your motorbike magazine has GRUNT, or that your radical newspaper will deal with the BIG issues. If you fail to consider carefully how you may use the print design specifications to visually communicate the essence of your idea to your audience, then you will soon discover that what you have done was to randomly push and place your text, images and other items around the page.

## Research

Study similar print products, and provide a sample of your exploration. As you find examples that catch your interest, try to unscramble the key design elements so that you understand how the product is structured to communicate. Try to gain an understanding of the range of different audiences, content, designs and production process that exist.

## Designing for your audience

Once you have decided on your intended audience, you should begin to gather your information and images, write your textual information and explore how you will construct this information in a way that will engage your audience. Your goal is to catch their attention, drawing them to your production. To do this, you must decide what is the important information, and then structure your page accordingly. Is it the title, the image, the article, or a company's brand name that matters most?

“ People read pages from left to right and from top to bottom. So the natural eye-flow is from top left of the page to bottom right. Therefore it might be best to have any picture, diagram or graph close to but after any writing that introduces it. ”

Rob McCubbin 1997

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**Head**  
The space above the top margin of the page.

# Print Production To

## Print Production

### Flash Scoop Report

**Drop Cap or Initial Cap**

A enlarged or fancy first letter is called a Drop Cap or Initial Cap.



Australia is the smallest and flattest continent. It is the only continent that is also a country, with the entire **landmass** controlled by one government.

**Introduction**

This has been specially written and typeset to draw in the reader. It's more than just the first paragraph of the article.

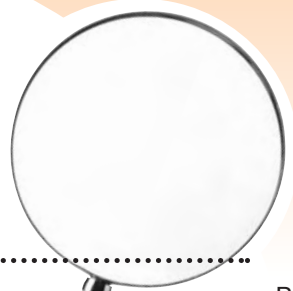
The name 'Australia' comes from the Latin word *australis*, which means 'southern'. The English nicknamed Australia 'the land down under', because it is in such a southerly position.

The word 'Australasia' is sometimes used to include Australia, New Zealand and certain Pacific islands.

Most of Australia is dry and thinly populated. Shortage of water is often a problem. Even so, Australia's coastal areas can be quite green and **fertile**, especially in the south-east. The largest cities are also in these coastal regions.

**White Space**

This is any area on the page which is unprinted, and therefore white. This space can still be used to help focus the reader's attention.



### Subheading One

Australia has a surprising variety of scenery, including rainforests, snowy mountains, sandy beaches and the world's longest chain of coral reefs and islands – the Great Barrier Reef. Australian animals, such as the platypus, kangaroo and koala, are unlike those of any other continent.

**Wrapped Text**

Text that wraps around another element. Achieved by applying 'Text Wrap' to an element or by placing text in a shaped frame.

Australia is a prosperous land, with productive industries such as farming, mining and tourism. Most of the people have a high standard of living.

2 - Media Magazine

**Footer**  
Repeated text or graphic at the bottom of page.

**Foot**  
The space below the bottom margin of the page.

**Body Text**  
The main text of the article or column.

**Crossover**  
Any element that crosses-over from one page to the next.

sample pages only

## Shapes

Shapes drawn in a layout program and used as graphic elements.

## Spread or Reader's Spread

Two pages side-by-side as readers of the magazine would see them when they have the magazine open.

# Techniques

## Subheading Two

Australia is the smallest and flattest continent. It is the only continent that is also a country, with the entire **landmass** controlled by one government.

The name 'Australia' comes from the Latin word *australis*, which means 'southern'. The English nicknamed Australia 'the land down under', because it is in such a southerly position. The word 'Australasia' is sometimes used to include Australia, New Zealand and certain Pacific islands.

Most of Australia is dry and thinly populated. Shortage of water is often a problem. Even so, Australia's coastal areas can be quite green and **fertile**, especially in the south-east. The largest cities are also in these coastal regions.

Australia has a surprising variety of scenery, including snowy mountains, lush green rainforests, sandy beaches and the world's longest chain of coral reefs and islands – the Great Barrier Reef.

### Subheading

Size and style of headings and subheadings denotes relative importance.

### Fade or Tint

A greyscale or single-colour bitmap can be set to print at a percentage of its full tone, making it lighter.

### Etched Photo

Photo whose background is made invisible by drawing a 'Clipping Path' in Adobe Photoshop.

### Bleed

Design elements which extend to the edge of the page must be placed to 'bleed' beyond the edge.

### Information Box

Most of Australia is dry and thinly populated. Shortage of water is often a problem. Even so, Australia's coastal areas can be quite green and fertile, especially in the south-east.

### Pull Quote

Quote or extract lifted from the body text and set in a different, more visually striking font, to attract readers' attention.

### Reversed-Out

Type that is set white against a black or solid-colour background.

Adapted from Kieran Crowley's 'Teaching Print Production' (unpublished).

## First draft

A first draft of the magazine should provide one A3-sized sketch of the entire production.

This gives a good overview of the production's structure, balance and 'rhythm'. Students should then prepare detailed sketches of each spread in their magazines and annotate the various design elements. The detailed sketches should be prepared at actual size or as close to it as possible. These sketches are not 'rough' but as accurately as possible show the size, position and proportion of elements on the page ... The sketches could be simple line drawings but the use of colouring and pasted-in elements will help students to better visualise the impact of their designs. Students should also experiment with different text settings and print out 'colour samples' of their chosen typefaces using different point sizes, leading values and column widths. Preparing sample or dummy text in this way may also help them calculate the word length required for their articles. Photos and other graphic elements could be test-printed on the specified output devices and media to ensure satisfactory results.

Kieran Crowley 'Teaching Print Production'

## Lists

Once all of your planning is complete, compile some lists to demonstrate your organisation and management of the production. Include all equipment, programs, research, schedules and your printing and submission dates of the finished production.

## Radio



A radio production or audio sequence can take the form of a soundscape, narrative, documentary, or opinion or experimental sequence including titles and/or credit sequences.

Radio productions offer the creator an incredible array of options. A 5-minute search through the channels of your radio quickly establishes the huge variety of creative styles available. Most Australian homes have 'at least four radios—all in different rooms or outside in the garden—tuned to the different taste of the listener' (Lois Baird, 1992, p.10). As they flick through

channels, listeners decide whether or not they want to be entertained or informed.

While one popular FM music channel presents a discussion on 'dress codes' and the importance of wearing black to media-related events ('Chill out, it's not who you are that matters, it's what you wear. Who cares who you really are, anyway?!'), another station on the AM dial is presenting an interview with a 9-year-old Afghani child who is pleading for her mother to be released from immigration detention.

When planning your radio production, clearly define and decide on your presentation style. The production of radio dramas and plays provides a great opportunity to explore the medium and your ability to use it to communicate effectively.

**In radio productions, 'The whole sense and emotional feeling of a phrase can be changed simply by changing the way we stress certain words' (Baird, 1992, p.58).**

Consider the phrase 'I don't care.' Your use of tone and inflection will determine how your audience receives and interprets this information. For example:

'I **don't** care.' An angry, rejecting statement

'I don't care' An open statement meaning that either way is fine with me... Really!

We trust our senses to pick up cues that inform us of the meaning behind the words. The email 'wars' that rage across the Internet are often caused by this medium's separation from the senses, which creates an environment for miscommunication and misunderstanding.

**sample pages  
only**

## The Booted Gorilla (found?)

Script by Spike Milligan and Erik Sykes

**Greenslade:** This is the BBC.  
FX: [cash register]

**Sellers:** Last orders, please!

**Secombe:** Mr. Sellers is merely trying to sabotage the highly esteemed Goon Show!  
FX: [mystic eastern music]

**Secombe:** Wales, glorious Wales! I love whales, but you rarely see them in the fish shoppes these days, do you? [laughs, clears throat] But, to business. Mr. Greenslade, button up your kilt and tell the waiting masses what's the play.

**Greenslade:** Certainly. Ladies and gentlemen ...  
FX: [cash register]

**Sellers:** Last orders, please!

**Secombe:** Sellers, stop that!

**Sellers:** Yes sir, which way did it go?

**Secombe:** I don't wish to know that.

**Voice:** [off] I don't wish to know that!

**Secombe:** I say, look here.

**Voice:** [off] I say look here...

**Secombe:** Remember, this is the highly esteemed Goon Show!  
FX: [cheers, 'Land of Hope and Glory']

**Secombe:** Stop! Stop!  
FX: [immediate stop]

**Secombe:** That may be good enough for other talking wireless shows, but not for us! And therefore ... and therefore, let us now hear the usual ovation that greets ... The Goon Show!  
FX: [silence]

**Secombe:** Thank you. Pull up a sock and sit down whilst I unfold a story of ...

**Greenslade:** The Booted Gorilla, Part One.

**FX:** [mystery fanfare]

**Secombe:** Africa! The well-known piece of land. There in the tree forest where civilization has not touched, there as darkness falls, all one can hear is ...

## Script

Before you start, decide on your story and its style or genre. The script is the formal structure you will use to help plan and communicate your story. Try to complete many drafts as early as you can, as the quicker you will complete them the more tips and advice you will receive to help you develop your story. An example of a radio script is presented on the left. This example is an extract from a Spike Milligan script titled 'The Booted Gorilla (found?)', an episode from the BBC 'Goon Show' series.

The radio drama script structure, as demonstrated here, helps you to integrate sound effects (FX) and dialogue, clearly indicating what the audience will hear. The actors' ability to manipulate the pace of their presentation, and the pitch and tone of their lines, is very important in helping the audience to understand the complexity of the script. As you can imagine, selecting actors with appropriate oral skills is essential. Notice the clever way in which the Goon Show script plays with words, engaging the audience with multiple levels of understanding.

### Script read-through

After you have prepared a script, organise a script read-through. This is a valuable way for you to work with your actors in developing the characters, and to find out whether your actors have the necessary vocal range and skills. But most importantly, it will help you to check the quality of your scripted dialogue.

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## Setting

The Goon Show script moved its audience from the studio to a jungle road in Africa. "Seagoon: Yes. [coughs] Oh, these jungle roads. Why are they so dusty?"

A great script will develop a sense of location for the audience. Bryan Quigley in the *Australian Film Television and Radio School Guide to Radio Production* explains that:

radio can present a more fleeting, intangible world than any other form ... because of the scope of the listener's own imagination. It can reproduce a vivid picture of anything from a steel factory and a violent thunderstorm through to a ... gently lit scene... (However) never forget the theater of the imagination ... your listener can't see what's happening without your help.

Quigley, 1992, p.144

## Sound effects and music

Sound effects and music will assist you to construct the world of your production. They can support your efforts to move an audience to a particular location, for example, inserting the screech of seagulls and waves to represent the beach. You can select sound effects from the thousands created on CDs, or you can gather your own.

## Lists

Compile a few organisational lists to help you manage your production. These should include dates for production meetings and rehearsals, a list of all of your sound-effects production needs, when and where you will get them from, a list of your music requirements, all equipment, production dates and your editing schedule.

'Sound effects should be used with the same considerations as music, especially in the "reason for existence" department. Never over-complicate the sound, and remember that simplicity is often your best tool' Cahill, 1992.

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# EXTENSION

## Script writing

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE SHORT

HOW DO YOU MAKE A CLASSIC SHORT FILM? WHY DO SOME FILMS STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD? TIMELESS SHORT FILMS DO NOT TARNISH, AS THEY ARE MADE WITH A CERTAIN CREATIVITY, REFINEMENT AND POLISH THAT CAN HOLD AND ENTERTAIN AUDIENCES OVER TIME. WRITING A TRULY GREAT SHORT IS HARD WORK, AND REQUIRES MUCH PLANNING AND MANY DRAFTS. WHEN STUDENTS ASK FOR HELP IN WRITING SHORT FILMS, THE ADVICE NEVER CHANGES: START WITH A GOOD IDEA, ADD STRUCTURE AND STIR TILL YOUR WRIST ACHES. A GOOD IDEA BACKED UP BY A CLEAR STRUCTURE AND HARD WORK IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GREAT ART. TRULY GREAT WORKS OF ART REQUIRE ABOUT 90 PER CENT EFFORT AND 10 PER CENT TALENT.

Having good taste is an essential talent and is a very difficult skill to learn; harder still to teach. Writers must develop their ability to pick from the endless array of options available. When your taste is given a structure, some guidelines or rules to work with, you will find selecting your characters, scenes and journeys easier. But taste alone is not enough. Imagine your story as a big pile of timber in a paddock: all different types and sizes of wood laying about. Most people could create shelter from such a pile, but the talented could create a beautiful home. When we appreciate great architecture we rarely, if ever, admire the frame. By learning from examples and applying the correct systems or rules, our projects, be they stories or houses, are more likely to stand up.

While it is the imagination that 'sees' the house, it is work that creates it. The most important thing you can learn about writing a short film is to start writing. Ideas that live in your head can get lost, forgotten or exaggerated. Test the strength of your

ideas by giving them life. What have you got to lose? If you put it down on paper and it's no good, so what? Learn from your mistakes and start again. In *Rebel Without a Crew* (1996) Robert Rodriguez argued that we all have about fifteen bad films in us that must be made for us to understand what a good film is. From your mistakes, you will learn what needs to be done. So don't be put off when the story you imagined to be so grand falls flat. Learn from it and write another one.

Bill Lensky from the 'Footscray City Film & TV Course', judges a good film by its effect on the audience. Bill explains the art quite simply:

**If the audience is lulled into a state of public dreaming then the film worked, if they aren't it hasn't!**

Let's explore this concept by examining the hidden structure of some award-winning Australian short films. The films are *Old Man* (2000), *Love From Guy* (1997) and *Fetch* (1999).

## SHORT FILMS

### Old Man (2000)

Written by Robin Feiner and Jesse Gibson  
3 minutes

In *Old Man*, the central idea is that one should not judge a book by its cover. We meet the protagonist (Basil Clark) on the street. He appears to the audience as a frail, vulnerable old man. His muttering letters of the alphabet to himself intrigues the audience, who begins to conclude from this seemingly mindless chatter that this old man is slightly demented. But we soon learn that Clark is a wise old man, indeed. His true character is revealed to us in the climax of the film, where we discover that he is motivated by the eye test he must complete to retain his driving license. The resolution to *Old Man* provides a short, sharp twist in this story, creating a climax that captures the imagination.

The climax reveals that Clark's muttering was part of a clever plan to pass an eye test; the audience is forced to challenge its previous judgements. We see when it is too late that the old man is not vulnerable. On the contrary, he is a clever, scheming fox who is capable of getting around the system and also of fooling the audience.

### Love From Guy (1997)

Written by Sandra Lepore  
24 minutes

In *Love from Guy* we view the struggles faced by men in a changing world. Guy is a Greek lad raised in a traditional patriarchal family. At a family dinner, Guy's mum quietly prepares and serves the meal. His dad points to the water; he is thirsty and there is no debate about his wife fulfilling his every need. Vita, Guy's new wife, has other ideas about how she wants to live, and eventually abandons Guy. The question of a man's place in the new order is what drives this tale. As the film progresses we see the protagonist, Guy, struggling in this new world of equality and trying to find his place in it.

*Love from Guy* climaxes with a positive moral message. Over the course of the film the audience has developed empathy for Guy in his very personal and lonely struggle. We are pleased that Guy has been 'man enough' to make the necessary transformation in his thinking during the film. The male chauvinist has been replaced by an

awakened, sensitive new age Guy. In his final video to Vita, Guy accepts responsibility for the error of his ways. In the resolution he is dressed in white as he opens the curtains to his home. The light from outside streams in, freeing Guy from this dark period in his life.

### Fetch (1999)

Written by Judie McCrossin  
5 minutes

In *Fetch*, a young nervous man, Matt Day, arrives at an apartment for what we presume is a blind date. A clue to this young man's intentions and his motivation are provided when he attempts to smell his own breath. While waiting for his date to get ready, Day plays a game of 'fetch' with the woman's dog. The ball he is bouncing goes out the window; the dog follows and falls three stories to its death. The film has quickly reached a turning point, and this character's motivation has now changed. He wants to leave. The audience is hooked, and wants to find out if he will get away with it. The turning point maintains the audience's interest.

We learn that Day is not so nice. He lies about the dog and selfishly thinks of protecting himself. The transformation from nice guy to selfish liar happens in an instant, and forces the audience to question their previous assumptions. The change has a powerful effect as the audience comes to see Day's character transformation as very real, and human.

In the resolution, the protagonist is caught, his terrible act is discovered and it appears that he is going to have to deal with the wrath of his date. But in a brilliant twist, the woman is hit by a truck and killed. By now the audience knows this young man better, and so we are not surprised when he briskly walks away from the carnage. The dark, somewhat negative ending to this film is positive for the audience, as we have come to relate to Day's humanness and his escape provides a certain satisfaction.

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## SHORT FILM STRUCTURE

### The idea

Each film should have one overriding idea around which the film pushes and pulls characters. By shifting back and forth between the different perspectives of the controlling idea, we move characters towards a climax. How we choose to represent our ending, as positive or negative, will depend on the meaning we wish to attach to our controlling idea. In *Love from Guy* (1997), the primary idea that moves the story is that equality has changed the nature of male and female relations, and that men struggle to keep pace with this change.

The Controlling Idea is the purest form of the story's meaning, the how and why of change, the vision of life the audience members carry away into their lives

Robert McKee, 1999, p.117

### Character and transformation

Good, well-rounded characters have many levels to their personality. Like all people, they are capable of good and evil. In contrast, a one-dimensional character acts as we expect them to. They say what we think they will and they hold very little about themselves hidden. This type of character is boring, predictable and not very real. In life, real people are not like this; they have ulterior motives, they tell you only what they want you to know. Real people use a mixture of self-control and a moral framework to hide or control their evil desires. It is only when you place people in real conflict that true character is revealed. A character's true personality can only be learned when we strip aside the conventional representation of a character and push them to act under pressure.

In *Fetch* we meet Matt Day and assume that he is a friendly person, with enough courage to go out on a blind date. He is polite, and he plays fetch with the dog. When the dog, following the ball, jumps out the window to his death, Day's true character is revealed. The way things appear to be is not what they truly are. When a character contradicts and/or works in opposition to their characterisation, true drama is created. This is also known as 'dimensions of character'.

### Text and subtext

A good scriptwriter understands that actors require dialogue and actions that contradict their true intentions, capabilities or motivations. 'This principle does not mean that people are insincere. It's a commonsense recognition that we all wear a public mask. We say and do what we feel we should, while we think and feel something else altogether. As we must ... We never fully express the truth, for in fact we rarely know it ... Nothing is what it seems. No text without subtext (Robert McKee, 1999, pp. 255–256).

In Western culture, this concept of a public and a private face is not well understood. The Japanese call these *Honne* and *Tatemai*. *Honne* means 'honest', what the person really thinks and feels about a situation. *Tatemai* is the 'spin' put on an idea or concept when true intentions are hidden. *Old Man* provides an excellent example of this principle. The old man is introduced to the audience as he mumbles nonsensical letters from the alphabet; his dialogue and tone suggest that he is lost or simply out of his mind. Only at the end of the film do we come to understand the meaning behind the letters he is yelling out. His mumbling was in fact a revision exercise to help him remember the structure of an eye test chart. Once he arrives at the Road Traffic Authority, we understand that he cannot see the chart, and that he performs the test from memory.

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### Turning points

In *Fetch*, within less than 2 minutes of screening time, the dog jumps out of the window, creating the film's turning point. A turning point is an unexpected twist in a story; this can happen in the first minute or in the last scene. The short film is really the first act, a teaser. When done well the audience is moved, often to a state of public dreaming:

In the Poetics, Aristotle deduces that there is a relationship between the size of the story—how long it takes to read or perform—and the number of major Turning Points necessary to tell it: the longer the work the more major reversals... Following Aristotle's principle: A story can be told in one act—a series of scenes ... that build up to one major reversal, ending the story. But if so it must be brief

Robert McKee, 1999, p.217

### Climax and resolution

The climax is the end of the road for your character; it is the crucial emotional outpouring that winds up the film. The climax may be positive, as in *Old Man*, or negative as in *Fetch*.

The meaning of that change moves the heart of the audience ... The Climax of the last act is your great imaginative leap. Without it you have no story. Until you have it, your characters wait like suffering patients praying for a cure.

Robert McKee, 1999, p.309

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# Chapter Summary

“ When forced to work within a strict framework the imagination is taxed to its utmost—and will produce its richest ideas. Given total freedom the work is likely to sprawl. ”

T.S. Eliot (quoted in Robert McKee, 1999)

Anyone who has ever made a media production understands that the individuals in the middle of this frantic, busy world are so overwhelmed by technical, organisational and creative demands that if the training and planning isn't completed in pre-production there is little to no chance that it will ever be. What's more likely to happen is that the ideas will be compromised during production.

Creative people, writers, photographers and designers, need to put aside the necessary time to learn the codes and conventions of their medium. Individuals need time and space to think and to develop ideas, but even more so, they need guidelines and structure.

The aim of this chapter has been to create a simple and clear teaching and learning framework for media students and teachers, an agreed-upon code that could be used to help students understand how to plan productions, what problems may be encountered along the way and some solutions. Please use this chapter as a scaffold, a structure to support your creative work. Remember, every ending is a new beginning and that our creations develop our understanding of the world and of ourselves.

“ The more I learn. The more I need to learn. ”

Albert Einstein



Web support

For a full list of relevant websites, go to [hi.com.au/media](http://hi.com.au/media)

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