



# Video Production Handbook

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# Project Criteria

1. **Appropriate to audience (school board/member) and intent (LCFF):**
  - “Civil” and respectful in tone
  - Need not directly or overtly address the board or member
  - Connection to the LCFF community input process should be clear
  - Two minutes or less in length
2. **Strong message/vision** – persuasive, compelling, convincing, interesting, concise and focused, holds attention.
3. **Well-constructed** – the video “flows” well throughout in narrative, argument, story, pace and timing; holds together, does not lag or meander, is not fragmented or confusing.
4. **Technically sound** – does not have disruptive or distracting technical errors (e.g. glitches, mis-edits, shaky shots, loud background noises, inconsistent sound).
5. **Unity** – All components (titles, text, shots, sounds, movements, story, information, etc.) contribute to message, i.e. nothing stands out as stylistically out of place or mismatched to the statement. Note that this does not mean that one cannot be eclectic, diverse, or show variety.
6. **Creative video production** – the video is creatively produced. It exhibits a creative approach, techniques, and/or concept. This does not mean “high production values,” as in “slick” special effects and professional equipment or facilities. Simple, low-cost production has equal access to creative use of the video camera, creative work in front of the camera, creative production ideas and writing.

# Video Responding Process

1. **Perceive** – Students identify and describe shots, edits, timing, sequence, composition, sound, lighting, titles, narration, combinations, tones, feelings, etc.
  - a) What did you see, hear, feel or notice?
  - b) What stood out? What did you notice? Why?
  - c) What components, elements, and/or principles were used?
  
2. **Analyze** – Examine how the video works the way it does, and its specific style
  - a) How did it work? First we saw, we heard...
  - b) How was it made? Why was that first? What happened at the same time? When did the music start?
  - c) Where was the camera? Who did what? Who was talking?
  - d) What style, genre, or form of video is this? How do you know?
  
3. **Interpret** – Speculate as to the intent and meaning of the production
  - a) Why was the video made that specific way?
  - b) What is it saying or expressing?
  - c) Why did the artist want to say this?
  - d) What does it mean?
  - e) Who is it for?
  - f) How did you come to that conclusion?
  
4. **Evaluate**
  - a) What worked or didn't work so well?
  - b) Where was the message strong and/or weak? Why?
  - c) How could it have been improved?

# Possible Video Genres/Styles

- Slideshow
- Advertisement
- Documentary
- News story
- Comedy act
- Theatre scene
- Interviews – have several people talk to the camera
- Poem, rap, spoken word or slam poetry
- Cartoon
- Animation
- Comic strip
- Dance
- Music video
- Silly novella or soap opera act
- Show some student art – dance, music, theatre, visual, media arts
- Interview a student artist

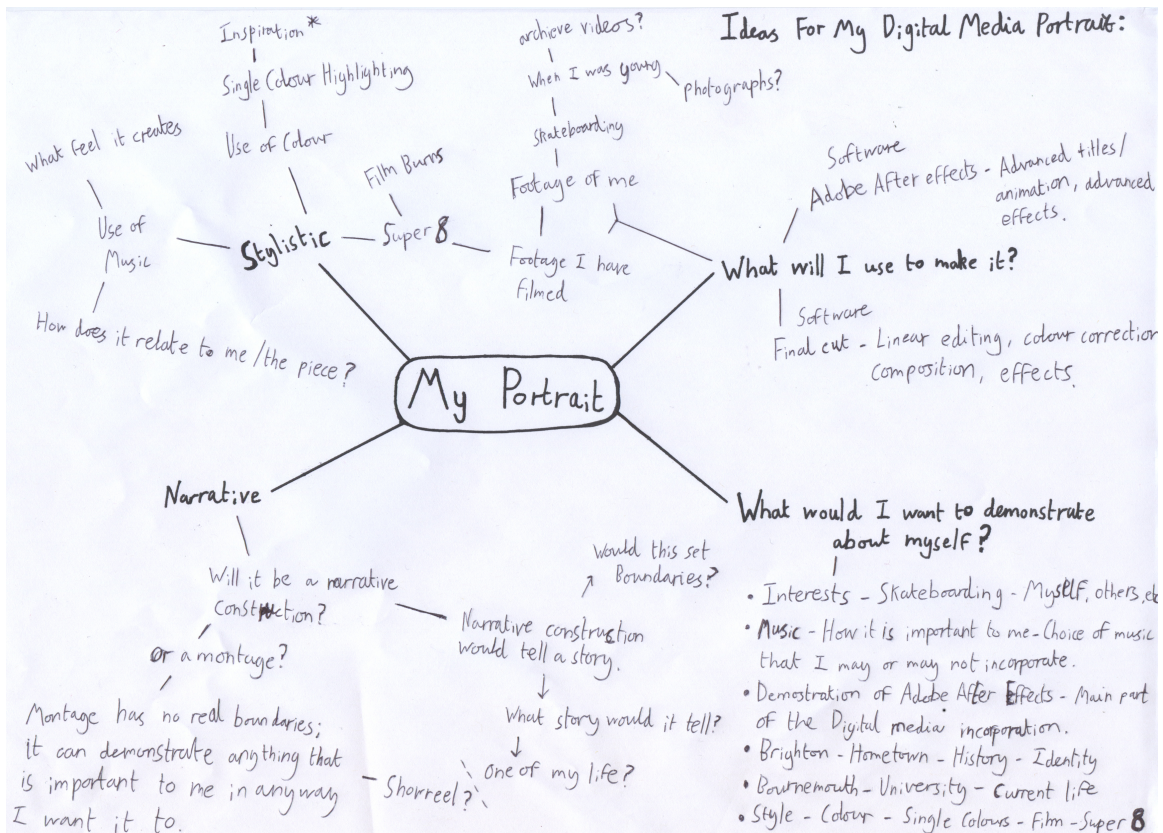
# Group Roles

Roles may be combined for one member (e.g. "Talent/Organizer")

- **Director/Manager** – has good grasp of whole project, can keep group on task, responsible, good problem-solver, leader
- **Artist** – can draw, is creative
- **Writer** – writing, note-taking, secretarial
- **Editor** – imports/uploads video, trims cuts, adds sound, etc.
- **Technical** – camera, computer, wires, software, troubleshooting
- **Talent** – performer, good speaker
- **Organizer** – keeps all in order, follows through
- **Extra/Support** – helpful, fills in where needed

# Mind-Map – “Pitch” Example: Connecting ideas

1. Brainstorm and accept all ideas
2. Select one idea
3. Add ideas and connected images, sounds, activities, words
4. Combine and consolidate connections
5. Develop a “pitch” idea:
  - Pitch example – “We will create an ad. It starts with a shot of a student who is bored in school. The student then gets to make art, and gets really excited...”



Forming Ideas for my own Digital Media Portrait. at [Al Hodgson AUCB BA DMP](https://alhodgsonn.wordpress.com/2010/11/26/forming-ideas-for-my-own-digital-media-portrait/),  
<https://alhodgsonn.wordpress.com/2010/11/26/forming-ideas-for-my-own-digital-media-portrait/>

# Pre-production Planning

## Develop: Storyboard

1. Copy and use the storyboard template to plan your video. Just like a comic book series of pictures, sketch out each shot in the frames and write any text below that. You can start with the images, or with the text. You can also write any technical notes about sound effects, transitions, or camera shots in parentheses.
2. A general rule is that you'll need at least 1 separate shot for every sentence, or better, every sentence part. Any time there is a pause, or comma, you may want to change the image.
3. Make sure everything you say can go with an image. Read the sentence. Can you think of an image to go with it? If not, your video may not work as well. You may need to change the wording or idea. **Keep in mind that you will probably make changes to your storyboard as your figure out the whole video. You can use post-it notes to make changes until the whole sequence works. For a complex video, it might be better to use index cards to produce the storyboard.**

### Sample Storyboard

You can create a storyboard using a piece of notebook paper. Fold it so you have six sections. Then use each section to sketch a different 'shot.' Sketch a picture and write a description of the shot, like the example below.

<i>Sketches go here</i>		
Bored student (medium shot)	Clock/book/ "Blah blah..." (dissolves)	More Bored Student (close-up shot)
<b>ART!</b>		
ART! (music kicks in)	Student Interested	Student Having fun and learning with arts ed

### How to Sketch:

- Stick figures are fine! Just try to position them to show the approximate size and position of the person
- Crude, very basic drawings, with little detail are fine, as long as people can make sense of it.

- A good test is to show your plans to someone else, to see if they could create your video without you explaining it.

### **How to Compose a Shot:**

- Get close! Especially when interviewing someone. Fill the frame! With people, lines, shapes, colors, movement.
- Use the Rule of 3rds for interesting compositions; e.g. don't always put the interviewee in the middle of the shot, place them at the 1/3 line with 2/3 background. Generally, place eyes at 1/3 line down from the top.
- Give room in front of the nose, when subject is facing in profile to the camera.
- Use a variety of shots, angles and distances to tell the story in an interesting way.
- Here is a great video link that gives basic rules on composing shots.
- <https://youthvoices.adobe.com/community/resources/517819968d536274ff000456>

## **Organize: Video Production Organization Chart**

From your storyboard, you should know, basically, what needs to be done. Now, plan how the work will get done in more detail.

1. Where and when will you shoot?
2. Who will need to be there to help?
3. What materials, equipment, props, costumes, will you need?
4. Who's bringing what?

### **Video Production Organization Chart**

Copy and use the chart below to organize your production activities. Depending on the video you are making, you may be shooting in various locations with various people, props and locations necessary for each shot. This chart will help you keep track of a more complicated project. The Organizer needs to make sure all team members have copies, and know about their individual responsibilities. If one thing is missing, that could ruin the whole event!

1. Scene Description – What part of your video are you shooting?
2. Date/Time(s) – When?
3. Shoot Time – How long will it take? Guess...
4. Location(s) – Where exactly?
5. Location Checklist – Think carefully about the location(s). Is it really appropriate? Will the location really help the story? Would you need permission to use it? Can you and team members easily get to it? What is the light like, and what would be the best time? Will there be people around? Background noise?
6. People/roles – Who needs to be there? Who does what? Has the person in front of the camera, or “talent”, signed a “Publicity Release Form”?
7. Equipment – Videocam, mic, tripod. Initials of person responsible next to any items.



8. Materials – Props, costumes, scripts, etc. Initials of person responsible next to any items.

### Sample Video Production Organization Chart

Video:			Group Names:				
Scene Description	Date/ Time(s)	Shoot Time	Location	Location Checklist Light Sound Permission	People/ Roles Talent – Publicity Release Form	Equipment	Materials
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			
				L S P			

# Pre Production Check List

With your pre-production notes in hand, you should have a solid plan for shooting. You should know:

1. # of shots
2. Basic composition of each shot
3. How the camera is positioned in relation to the subject
4. What is being said
5. Where you will shoot
6. Anything that is needed for the shot
7. Who will be there

# Recommended Production Methods and Techniques

## Collaboration and Team Work

1. Everyone needs to make the effort to get along and to always help out
2. Since the plans are done and decided upon, go by the plans
3. Director is the leader with responsibility, who decides, but takes advice
4. People and group may make suggestions to the Director
5. Director oversees camera, talent; orders, manages shoots, number and method of “takes”
6. Technical/camera person – in charge of “look” of shot; positions and works tripod/camera

## Shooting Good Video

1. Start the camera 3 seconds before the action, stop 3 seconds after the action
2. The Director should say out loud, “Record... (3 sec)... Action!”
3. Use the Rule of 3rds to compose
4. Avoid distracting backgrounds, e.g. too colorful, busy, or distracting objects
5. Do not use the zoom; better to use a separate close-up shot
6. Try to use manual focus. Auto-focus tends to continually adjust itself, but can work with a moving subject
7. Use a tripod if possible
8. No tripod? Stabilize the camera on or against an object/person
9. If you have to, stand with feet at shoulder width, two hand camera
10. Don't zoom in or move the camera too much

## Lighting

1. Balance the light if possible, so it's not extreme
2. Not overly bright or dark
3. Directly in the talent's face, or behind their face
4. Use nearby light surfaces, or hold up large white paper or windshield heat foil to bounce light to shadow side
5. Use the white balance setting if possible to get true whites

## Sound

1. Use a video camera with external mic input, if possible
2. If you have a mic input, wear headphones, and check the sound level before recording
3. No external mic? Sound is super important! Get the camera as close as possible to the person talking, and have them speak clearly
4. Listen for distracting background noises before and while shooting

## Interviewing

1. Get close to the subject, both for filling the frame and for good sound
2. Practice the interview with crew before shooting
3. Make sure interviewee knows questions and can practice answers
4. Remind interviewee to answer in complete sentences and include the question in the response

## Capturing Movement and Artistic Expression

1. Try lots of different angles and positions; get extreme close-ups and angles (e.g. floor, overhead)
2. Fill the frame with action, with the expression of the art form, and avoid being far away, unless it adds important information
3. Move camera smoothly with the action, staying ahead of action with “nose-room”

### **Composition Examples**

- Rule of 3rds
- Extreme long shot
- Long shot
- Medium shot
- Close-up shot
- Extreme close-up
- High angle
- Low angle
- Proper headroom
- Nose room
- Front pose
- $\frac{3}{4}$  pose
- Profile pose

# Post-Production Notes:

## Editing, sound

Note: Students will need to play their sound low as they work together on their computers. It is assumed that the class does not have “headphone splitter” jacks or headphones for groups.

### Editing

Basic Generic Example: Using online, free video editing software (e.g. Wevideo.com [note: there will be a “Wevideo” watermark on the completed video with the free version])

Video editing is a fairly easy and intuitive process with this simple tool. The Wevideo website also has several tutorial videos that can quickly orient users to the editing process and techniques. The basic steps of the process are:

1. Wevideo.com – Start an account (students under 13 need parental permission)
2. Import and/or upload media (images, video, narratives, graphics files)
3. Drag media in order to the timeline, and rearrange if needed
4. Add or record narration in an audio track
5. Edit, or “trim” clips to the best material and to sync with narration (1 image per phrase is often best; try not to have any ‘dead’ or pausing time)
6. Add transitions (only if appropriate or necessary, best limited to dissolves)
7. Add titles and/or captions
8. Add non-copyrighted music (keep any music very low level during narration)
9. Export or publish the completed movie to your computer or online storage (CAAE will only accept videos from Youtube)

One common and professional technique used in interviews is to cut to illustrative images or video after the interviewee has begun talking (“B-roll”). This process is easy in Wevideo, because you simply place the interview on a lower, “main” track, and then place any images or video (muted) on a secondary track above that interview.

### Sound Production

Wevideo and most basic video editing software contain non-copyrighted music soundtracks you can instantly insert into an audio track. There are simple and free or inexpensive music editors available online or as apps for most computers or personal devices.

The production process is similar to video editing in that samples are dragged to a timeline and mixed on multiple audio tracks. Combining or “remixing” musical tracks and

using audio effects can be an easy way to create something more original with these basic tracks.

See Appendix: Additional Technical Resources for digital music production resources.