

Guide for HSC Video

So you've chosen to make a video for your HSC major work, Good on you!! You've not chosen the easy option but I reckon it is the most rewarding one. Each year SCHOOL TORQUE gets dozens of calls around July from students trying to rescue their projects. We thought we would give you some tips that will help you on the road to success.

HSC Tips (General)

- 1) You must have a high level of access to a digital camera and a computer edit system.
- 2) You also must have access to an advisor that understands the story making process and the technology used in video production. You are likely to need a good deal of help.
- 3) Don't use hacked software. It will have decreased functionality and you will need the manuals to get best results.
- 4) Plan very carefully. Each hour spent in planning will save you at least 3 hours in post production.
- 5) Producing a 5-7 min piece will take many many hour of work. Shooting generally takes 4 days and editing around 30 hours. Be prepared for this time requirement.

HSC tips (Production)

- 6) DON'T leave your production until the last minute, get on to it early, set you own deadlines two weeks before the schools
- 7) Shooting video often uses many other people. Don't loose sight of the fact that they are giving you their time. If you want the best results, treat them carefully. It's the right thing to do anyway. Remember your crisis in not necessarily going to be anyone else's.
- 8) Donuts are good!!
- 9) If possible do all of your shooting over as shorter time as you can ie. over one week end. The following weekend can be used to reshoot any scenes if required. This is important for other peoples organisation and for continuity when you are using actors that may decide to cut or dye their hair etc.
- 10) If you need to record spoken lines on tape use a microphone plugged into the camera. or a radio link if you have access to one. Use headphone to monitor your audio.
- 11) Pay attention to your lighting. Analyse how lights are used to create effect on your favourite show. Be creative, try to copy these effects with the lights you have available to you. Slide projectors and over head projectors can come in handy.
- 12) Read as much as you can to discover techniques relevant to the style of video you are to produce. Watch TV programs in the same style an analyse how the producers achieve the result you like.
- 13) It's not a good idea to use 'in camera' special effects when shooting video. It is much better shoot your scene raw and add effects in edit. This way you can use effects or not.
- 14) When you shoot you need to have continuous time code throughout your tape. Most importantly do not leave any blank tape between takes. Editing programs don't work to well if there are blank section between takes or if the time code reverts back to zero half way through your tape. Resist the urge to look at each take after it is shot.
- 15) It is a good idea to start recording 10 seconds before your 'action' starts, and keep rolling 10 seconds after the action stops. This will give you space for the editing process.

16) If you do need to look at a take after shooting it, park the camera on the extra footage after the action stops before you resume shooting.

17) Some cameras will reset time code each time you change batteries. Using long life batteries help with this problem. If you change tapes when you change batteries the time code issue will be taken care of.

HSC tips (Editing)

18) Make sure you have good access to a computer edit system. Minimum requirements are 80 gig drive, a 1 GIG Clock and 512 ram.

19) Log your tapes and digitise ONLY what you need. Remember most of the editing process takes place in your mind.

20) Don't fill your drive to more than 2/3rds full!!!!

21) Final Cut Express, Final Cut Pro or Abobe Premier are the programs we recommend.

22) Most students will take too long to develop a part of their story in their final production. The trick is when you've completed your rough edit, ask yourself the question; 'Could I leave any part out and still carry the same meaning?' If the answer is yes, re-edit.

23) Have a truthful intelligent (p'haps brutal) person look at your production and advise you on whether or not your story is working.

24) Editing takes on average 4 times longer that you think. Be prepared for this time load. The experts generally take 1 hour per min on air, you are likely to take 10 times this!!

25) Save your work often!!

26) When you have finished your editing make several copies of the final product. (just in case)

HSC Tips (Final Advice)

If my words of advice haven't put you off, good on you!!! You are in for a rewarding experience. Best advice is have fun!! Check out the School Torque web site. It has many helpful tips. If you need some specific advice you can always send us an email.

We also have a video resource 'VIDEO PRODUCTION, a classroom survival guide' which is extremely valuable for anyone producing HSC video projects, see web site for details. www.schooltorque.com

All The Best
Al Ellis (Producer, SCHOOL TORQUE.)

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