

Students at the Center

Rationale for Teaching Writing Through Video Production

During the 2000-01 school year, Students at the Center (SAC) began experimenting with using video production to teach writing. Two factors made this innovation possible. First, SAC conceives of writing as more than simply creating traditional texts. It also involves using visual and audio to generate, arrange, and present the author's experiences and thoughts. Second, with the introduction of the Apple iMac DV computer a little over a year ago, video editing in the classroom became affordable. We no longer have to rely on parents or field trips to give students access to quality digital editing.

This approach to teaching writing is important because it provides high interest, reinforces writing skills, and accommodates multiple learning styles and assignments.

Video production is high interest for students, often involving students who otherwise would not be involved. This interest works in a few ways.

- 1) The instruction is "hands-on," allowing students to work directly with cameras and computers to produce short videos.
- 2) The work is in a medium students watch every day.
- 3) Students can develop writings to share with an audience through video.
- 4) Video production offers alternative formats for learning and demonstrating learning, thus providing the potential to reach students who have difficulty succeeding in traditional educational settings.

Video editing skills reinforce writing skills. In video editing, students must organize material, consider audience responses, build transitions, and strategize the connections among visual images, text, and sound. In addition, digital editing allows students to explore alternate ways to arrange the same material.

Video production offers students numerous opportunities to work with a variety of texts. The following list gives examples of the types of videos SAC students complete to improve their writing skills.

- 1) Some students have turned essays and poems that they or their classmates have written into videos. This process leads to revision, a vital skill that students seldom practice in traditional pen and paper settings. Such revision involves skills such as a) reshaping the same material to fit a new medium, b) considering how visual and auditory material can enhance a text, which in turn leads to deeper work on text only, c) thinking more deeply about audience reaction, which again can/should translate into writing, d) recognizing and manipulating organization, transition, pattern, and other features of good writing.
- 2) Students can also take a text their class is studying and develop a video from it. This activity also helps students become better readers as they analyze closely a text to develop accompanying visual and auditory images.
- 3) Other students have used videotaped oral histories to create documentaries and video essays. In this process they learn to gather and shape material.

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Suggested Equipment Purchases for Video Production Classes

For each school site, purchase at least one of the following items. May also need security system and/or rolling cart.

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| <p>1. Apple iMAC computer (G3-800mhz/256mb/40gb/CD-RW) \$1299
 (alternate purchase for sharing with another school or classroom = Apple iBOOK 500mhz/64mb/10gb/cd/12.1 at cost of 1,199.95)
 (suggested vendor B&H, 420 Ninth Ave., NY, NY 10001
 www.bhphotovideo.com 1-800-221-5743 OR Apple)</p> |
| <p>2. SONY DCR-TRV900 3CCD Camcorder (mini DV) \$1619
 (alternate purchase for higher quality at good price = SONY DCR VX2000 3CCD Camcorder at \$2350)
 (suggested vendor Troxell Communications, Inc.,
 1201 St. Charles Ave. # 105, N. O., LA 70130,
 1-800578-8858)</p> |
| <p>3. SONY LCH-TRV 900 (hard case for the SONY TRV 900) \$ 138
 (suggested vendor Troxell Communications, Inc.,
 1201 St. Charles Ave. # 105, N. O., LA 70130,
 1-800578-8858)</p> |
| <p>4. ZTC VC13Y Case for Camcorder \$ 31.90
 (suggested vendor Troxell Communications, Inc.,
 1201 St. Charles Ave. # 105, N. O., LA 70130,
 1-800578-8858)</p> |
| <p>5. Velbon Videomate 607 Heavy Duty fluid head tripod w/ case \$ 69
 (suggested vendor Troxell Communications, Inc.,
 1201 St. Charles Ave. # 105, N. O., LA 70130,
 1-800578-8858)</p> |
| <p>6. 50 quantity DBL SON DVM-60PR digital video tapes \$ 260
 @ 5.20 per tape
 (suggested vendor Troxell Communications, Inc.,
 1201 St. Charles Ave. # 105, N. O., LA 70130,
 1-800578-8858)</p> |
| <p>7. SEN MKE300 (shotgun microphone) \$ 164
 (suggested vendor Troxell Communications, Inc.,
 1201 St. Charles Ave. # 105, N. O., LA 70130,
 1-800578-8858)</p> |
| <p>8. HDD Maxtor 80gb firewire external hard drive \$ 282
 (suggested vendor MicroWarehouse www.warehouse.com
 1-800-warehouse)</p> |

TOTAL \$3862.90

