May 17, 2012

Dear Students,

It has come to my attention that many of your teachers have begun to assign you video projects. After having met with a number of you, on an individual basis, I have decided to rearrange our Tech 101 classes and add a Unit on video production. Although most of you seem to have a working knowledge of the flip cam, what you are lacking are the proper steps necessary to actually create the type of videos your teachers are asking for. During the next 7 classes, I promise you will not only learn the proper steps, but you will have fun along the way.

Typically, there are six steps to video production – the *last* of which is filming. Before you pick up a video camera and start shooting, there are a number of things you need to do beforehand. It is important to understand the basics of filming first – what is your topic, who is your audience, how long is your video going to be, what style do you intend to use? In this case, I can help you with a couple of the basics. In groups you will be creating a three minute video about dorm life at EHS.

Once you understand the basics you need to learn how to brainstorm a bit, select an idea and write up a treatment (an outline of your idea). After your treatment has been completed you will move on to storyboarding. Storyboarding is important because it helps you put your scenes on paper so you can see what they look like. You don't have to be a great artist for storyboarding; stick figures work just fine, but you do have to understand camera angles and shots and you need to know who your characters are and what they are going to say. You also need to understand production techniques, such as lighting, point of view, animation, camera movements and camera set-up.

Now you have to decide who, in your group, is going to do what. Who is going to direct, who is going to work the camera, who is going to put together props and find locations, who is going to be in front of the camera? It isn't important who does what, but it is important that each member of your group gets the opportunity to fulfill each role. The only exception to that is acting. Realizing that some people have a real problem being in front of the camera, you are welcome to ask friends outside your class to be your actors if no one in your group wants to be; however, you do have to have them approved. Their participation cannot interfere with anything they have going on in any of their own classes.

After you have chosen roles and outside actors, if any, have been you must rehearse. Rehearsing is a very important step in the process, because it gives you the opportunity to find out what works and what doesn't, what dialog works and what doesn't and/or what camera shots are good and which are bad. It also gives you time to work out the giggles. Some people find, stepping in front a camera, is a time to be silly. Sometimes it takes a few tries to get the "funny" bug to go away and get serious about the scene you are shooting. Once all of these steps are complete then, and only then, should you grab a camera and start filming.

We will discuss the different types of filming options in class, but for this particular shoot you will be using in-camera editing. In-camera editing means every shot has to be just right before

moving on to the next one, because if a mistake is made, you can only correct it by reshooting the "bad" scene and every scene after. You aren't permitted to use any type of editor for this project, so if you want to add a title to your production, or credits at the end, you will need to find a creative way to do so. Software editing will be covered in another unit.

If you counted the steps above, you may have noticed I only describe six, even though I mentioned we would work together learning video production for 7 classes. Class 7 will be our "movie review", complete with popcorn and snacks. Like any good movie review, you will have the opportunity to introduce your piece and say a little about it. You will also have the chance to introduce members of your group and explain their roles in your film, if you didn't add credits to the end. Also, as with most movie reviews, your audience will have the chance to critique your work (and you theirs).

I know it sounds like a lot to cover in 3 very short weeks, but I am confident you will learn it all quickly, your videos will come out spectacularly and you will take away invaluable knowledge that will help you later on in your other subjects. I am looking forward to watching what you come up with and can't wait to start "rolling".

See you in class,
Mrs. Peralta