Success Is in the Planning

Storyboarding Video Projects

What Is the Difference between a Script and a Storyboard?

According to *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition (1996) the following definitions apply:

Script—the **written text** of a stage play, screenplay, or broadcast; *specifically*: the one used in production or performance. [This definition would apply to videotapes in the classroom also.]

Storyboard—a panel or **series of panels** on which a **set of sketches** is arranged depicting consecutively **the important changes of scene and action in a series of shots** (as for film, television show, or commercial).

Storyboards are a visual script or a plan of the camera shots that will tell the story. The *Eejit's Guide to Film-making* / http://www.exposure.co.uk/eejit/storybd/ refers to them as "acting with a pencil." There should be one storyboard sketch for each camera shot planned.

Why Should My Students Take the Time to Create Storyboards?

There are several reasons to create storyboards. Storyboards:

1. provide a means for brainstorming ideas.

2. help the students visualize what the finished product will look like.

3. help the students use their time and resources to the best advantage.

4. make it easier to plan how and what to edit for the final project. [Always remember, it is easier to change the storyboard than to edit the videotape.]

5. cut down on the amount of time needed to edit a project.

6. keep everyone on the "same page" during the production process.

7. help avoid missed opportunities for camera shots that should have been taken.

How Does the Videotaping Process Compare with Written Assignments?

There definitely are comparisons that can be made between the steps in the processes of these two activities. A basic outline for each activity is shown below. From the chart it is easy to see that the two activities have some parallels. But, the major difference lies in the concept of storyboarding.

Writing	Videotaping
Pre-Writing • Researching • Outlining	Pre-Production • Researching • Scripting (the text) • Storyboarding (the camera shots)
Drafting • Writing first draft	Production • Taping scenes
Editing • Revising first draft	Post-Production • Editing videotape
Publishing	Presenting

Just as a teacher expects students to follow a process for written projects, the students should be expected follow a well defined process for creating quality video projects.

Remember: Storyboarding is one of the most important steps in the videotaping process. As part of the process, students may want to include notes about (1) the approximate time for each scene, (2) movement or transition from one scene to another, (3) special camera angles, and (4) any special effects.

Important Note: Each section of the storyboard should be numbered in a consecutive manner.

What Important Things Do I Need to Point Out to My Students?

Point out the following things to your students:

- Always remember that the storyboard is ***not*** the end product itself. Students should not waste time making the storyboard perfect. Stick figures, circles, boxes, and other substitutes for figures or objects are fine for storyboards.

- It is important to note also that everything should be done in pencil for ease of editing the storyboard.

- Every scene contained in the storyboard should somehow contribute to the message/purpose of the video. It the scene doesn't contribute anything, omit it.

- Storyboards depict major scenes. They are not a frame-by-frame recreation of the videotape.

What Are Some of the Things My Students Need to Consider When Selecting Scenes to Videotape?

They should always consider their audience, their message, and the method of delivery of that message.

1. Who is their **audience**? Who will they be "talking to" through the videotape?

2. What is the **message** of the videotape? What is its purpose?

3. What **method of delivery** works best for presenting that message to that audience? For example, consider the types of camera shots that can be used.

   - Close-ups—used to show details, expressions/emotions

   - Medium-range shots—usually involve one or two people at fairly close range; used to show interaction

   - Long shots—used to set the scene and let the audience know where the action is taking place

Camera angles are also important and affect the audience's perspective.

- Shooting from above—makes the person or object being filmed seem weak

- Shooting from below and looking up—makes the person or object being filmed seemed dominant

- Shooting from behind a person—makes the audience view things as that person might view them

Is There an Example I Can Use to Help My Students Understand the Process?

Let's take a standard example. Suppose the students had the assignment of creating a videotape to send to a class in another school to serve as an introduction of themselves and their high school. Let's call it, "A Day in the Life of Metro High School." Obviously the students could not tape all 7 hours of an average school day, so they would have to ask themselves, "What scenes could they choose that best represent what happens at school on a typical day?"

Once the students have selected the scenes they felt were representative, they will have to decide the following:

- Who will appear in each scene?

- Which camera angles will be best to use for each scene?

- What size frame will be best for each scene: long shot, medium-range shot, close-up, or extreme close-up?

- Will any special lighting or other techniques help make the message clearer?

- What transitions will work best between scenes?

- Should music or other sound effects be used to enhance particular scenes?

Types of Camera Shots	
Scene and Camera Shot	**What Is Accomplished**
Long shot of the school	Will set the scene and introduce the audience to the school's location and physical plant
Medium shot of two students talking	Might be used to introduce students' style of dress
Close-up of student taking a test	Could be used to show that the student is concentrating on the test
Extreme close-up of the test paper	Could be used to indicate high level of academic rigor if the paper shows a complex math problem

What Can The Students Use to Create Their Storyboards?

The format for storyboards can be left up to the teacher or to the students. Beginning students might do well to first jot ideas on index cards because the cards can be moved around easily if the sequence of scenes changes. Once the final sequence is selected, the information can be transferred to other storyboard formats if the teacher prefers.
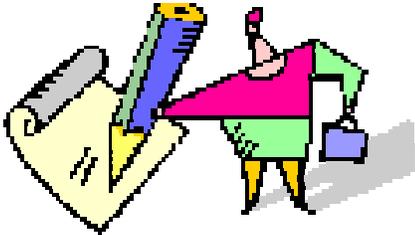
Some storyboard format options are:

- Index cards

  - o Advantage: one scene per card and can be rearranged easily to change the sequence of scenes

  - o Disadvantage: would be difficult to provide pre-printed headings

  - o Disadvantage: could be more easily misplaced by the students

- Blank *PowerPoint* slide printed as a notes page with blank lines in the notes section

  - Advantage: one scene per page would allow for easy rearrangement if sequence of scenes changed

  - Advantage: ample room for notes at the bottom regarding each scene

  - Disadvantage: box for drawing scene would be larger than necessary

- Blank *PowerPoint* slides (3) printed as handouts, 3 per page

  - Advantage: provides small box for sketch and lines for comments

  - Disadvantage: slides could not be rearranged easily

- Blank *PowerPoint* slides (6 or 9) printed as handouts, 6 or 9 per page

  - Advantage: small boxes so sketch does not become overriding concern

  - Disadvantage: no lines are printed on which to make notes

  - Disadvantage: slides could not be rearranged easily

- Templates available online

  - What's in a Video?
    http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/resources/units/video/storyboard.html

  - Plan Your Digital Video
    http://edtech.guhsd.net/video/videoplan.html

What Are Some Online Resources That I Can Use to Learn about Using Video in the Classroom?

Acting with a Pencil: Storyboarding Your Movie
http://www.exposure.co.uk/eejit/storybd/index.html
Contains storyboard templates as well as examples of how to indicate camera angles in the storyboard sketches

Glossary
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~ricky/etec/glossary.html
Contains definitions for commonly used terms related to videotaping; linked to other information on videotaping for the classroom including a section on storyboards

Making Movies: Before You Shoot Checklist
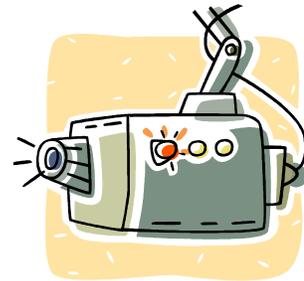http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/resources/units/movies/checklist.html
Contains information "designed to make shooting fail-safe"; valuable resource to use with students

Making Movies: A Video Production Guide for Students by Betty D. Gorsegner
http://www.bham.net/bieff/guide1.htm
Contains step-by-step information on each stage in the video production process

Moment in Time
http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/sites/Projects/P007/P007_process.html
Includes an interesting class activity focusing on the different viewpoints that emerge when students videotape the same subjects

Planning a Video Using a Storyboard
http://199.104.212.139/teachers/virtual_Academy/VideoCameraClassroom/VideoCameraStepsUsingStoryb.pdf
Contains valuable information from Avid, an editing program on storyboarding and tips on how and what to shoot when videotaping

Project-Based Learning with Multimedia
http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/TechHelp/Storyboarding.html
Storyboarding guide containing sketches and dialogue that explain the process in detail

Practice Your Skill at Storyboarding

Select one of the topics below. Create a storyboard for a videotape that you might create to introduce your students to these topics. Use any of the suggested formats for creating your storyboard, but include at least 6 scenes. If you prefer to use a topic of your own choice, feel free to do so.

- Meet the Staff
- School Clubs and Organizations
- Your First Day at _____ School
- Class Rules and Procedures
- Science Fair Project 101
- Lunch at Our School
- Why I Became a Teacher