

Chapter 4.12

Teaching Off–Line Digital Video Editing On–Line: An Exploration into Editing and Postproduction Digital Pedagogic Practice

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses upon a case study of an online higher education intervention – an interactive resource the author has devised as an aid to the teaching and learning of undergraduate digital video editing (DVE). This resource specifically addresses drama and fiction postproduction principles, practice and techniques. The repository, which includes streamed materials available to download, guides the student through the film production process in a step-by-step way (for students), with suggested class based activities and tasks using the materials (for tutors). The resources include the script, all planning documentation, all production paperwork, and all rushes shot for different productions. The student/tutor navigates through these materials guided by a combination of voice-overs, video tutorials by those personnel involved in the production, and clips taken from the “making of” documentaries. This chapter explores the intervention within the wider context of higher education online teaching and through the lens of virtual learning environment pedagogic theory.

We are on the cusp of a global revolution in teaching and learning. Educators worldwide are developing a vast pool of educational resources on the Internet, open and free for all to use. These educators are creating a world where each and

every person on earth can access and contribute to the sum of all human knowledge. They are also planting the seeds of a new pedagogy where educators and learners create, shape and evolve knowledge together, deepening their skills and understanding as they go. (Cape Town Open Education Declaration, 2007)

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1 INTRODUCTION

As a UK-based practitioner teaching university undergraduate video editing and post production for 7 years, I have faced constant challenges of sourcing and innovating visual materials with which to devise class-based teaching exercises, while managing growing student numbers and class sizes. To this end I have devised and developed an on-line teaching resource: *i-mpact* - Interactive Resource for Media Professionals and Academics Collaborating in Teaching (www.i-mpact.org.uk), within which to stream and allow access to relevant learning materials. The longer-term ideal of the project is that both students and colleagues across institutions will continually add and contribute to this resource.

My teaching of DVE has a dual focus. It incorporates an operational level – that is, teaching students how to drive the software and hardware in order to gain an in-depth working knowledge into the functionality of the different postproduction programmes. On the other-hand, tuition takes place on an aesthetic level – that is developing an awareness and understanding of the principles and practices of DVE – enhancing the student’s appreciation and consideration of the audio and sound design, and the different visual styles, genres, approaches and aesthetics. The latter endeavour is centred on the history and craft of DVE itself, which I have approached in-class by using techniques such as visually demonstrating the act of cutting, primarily using visual examples from commercially available television and film footage. Students then practice these techniques and have the opportunity to develop their visual awareness, analytical skills and storytelling skills. These approaches sit within the wider remit of a higher education module of study within which transferable academic skills are also developed. For example, the student’s critical and analytical skills are progressed within their experience of peer review and assessment when they are given the opportunity to critique one another’s work.

In class sizes of 20 plus students, these teaching approaches have become ever more challenging in terms of ensuring equality of student experience. In terms of the classroom learning environment itself, many students are often positioned too far away from the screen on which the software interface is projected and demonstrated, and cannot fully see the intricacies of the interface and the smaller tools, icons and buttons therein. The diversity of student ability also leads to students working at varied paces. There is a definite need to support the class-based mode of delivery both within and beyond the classroom environment. The migration of some class-based content and the addition of supporting materials towards a blended learning approach within a virtual learning environment have therefore become inevitable. The concept of blended learning:

...is commonly associated with the introduction of online media into a course or programme, while at the same time recognising that there is merit in retaining face-to-face contact and other traditional approaches to supporting students, It is also used where asynchronous media such as email or conferencing are deployed in conjunction with synchronous technologies, commonly text chat or audio (Macdonald, 2006, p.2).

Rather than viewing this content migration as an imposition, as an academic and professional compromise, I have been using the development of the *i-mpact* resource to look at ways to embrace and to use these opportunities to their best.

The overall aim of the *i-mpact* resource has been to align and adapt blended approaches with the cultural trajectory on which the mass inception that these technologies have taken us. That is, into the realms of web 2.0 phenomenon such as file-sharing, open source software, social networking, blogging, tweeting, modding and mashing-up.

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