

# **Quiet on the Set ....and..... ACTION!**

## **Directing Your Video**

Creating your own film is a great creative project which allows you to explore an idea, visualize how it will look and sound, and to direct others in realizing this vision. Ideas are from you - there are no limits (well, okay, be realistic, it is for school after all). The acting will be fresh, and full of creative energy.

*"The world of reality has it's limits; the world of imagination is boundless."*  
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau

**All great directors have a *vision* ..... what is your vision?**

You will be allowed to edit the video - on computer or using two VCR's and a television set - depending upon your own confidence, ability and availability of equipment. You may choose to shoot it and *not* edit, but this must be due to a creative decision (not because you ran out of time) .

The film, may take any number of forms, depending upon the project. You will make a written plan it out, present your idea to the class and film it with their co-operation. It is essential to have a good plan - even if it is to be improvised for actual filming.

## **Be Fresh and Original**

**Things to consider for your plan:** brainstorm notes here, then write out a more detailed plan with a storyboard to hand in to the teacher)

What is it about?

What style will you use?

(experimental, music video, documentary, interview, drama, romance, satire, horror, fantasy, short story, poetry, dance, comedy, instructional, advertising, etc)

How many actors will you need?

Where will it be filmed?

Do you need any special props, costume or effects?

How will sound/music be used?

Will it be filmed in colour, black and white or sepia (brown)?

## **Planning the Shots:**

Each shot should be considered for its impact, both visually and aurally. You may shoot a well thought out story and then find in the editing that the actors have turned from the camera and cannot be heard.

You need to create a storyboard which outlines the plan. The storyboard creates a scene by scene breakdown using simple drawings (stick people work just as well) and/or a description. It's helpful to also use a language of symbols to communicate meaning (much like blocking symbols):

Point of View = pov

(who's eyes are we looking through? outsider, main character, bird's eye, etc)

Long Shot = l.s.

(Filmed from a distance, used to see the whole image.)

Medium Shot = m.s.

(Filmed from mid range, creates more intimacy, see the actor from the waist up.)

Close Up = c.u.

(Generally head and shoulder, it is for emotional impact and greater insight.)

Extreme Close Up = x.c.u.

(Example: focus in on an eye as a tear drips down, impact is strong; you can also use this technique to create abstract images)

Zoom In or Zoom Out = z> or z< (or use arrows)

(A scene may move from a long shot to a medium or close up, or vice versa, to indicate interest building or to draw attention to a detail. Be sure to practise a smooth zoom and know exact placement of actors.)

Tracking = use arrows to indicate direction

(Used to follow action or movement, generally the focal point does not change; consider if the camera will rotate on a stationary tripod or if it will move. A hand held camera while walking will create a jerky image or you can try pulling the camera on a tripod mounted on a dolly for a smoother effect.)

Special Effects = sfx

(Some effects may be possible with the camera, such as strobe, snap shots, fades, or colour. Some effects may be put in while editing. If you use Imovie (computer program) you will have many special effects available. Be cautious about using too many effects as it can cheapen the overall look of the film.)

## **Other Resources and Useful Links:**

### Acting in Film

- \* book and video form
- \* a workshop with Michael Caine, shot in a studio, works through many common acting techniques specific to film (as opposed to stage)
- \* excellent for high school and adult

### Communication Production Technology

- \* Saskatchewan Education course
- \* web based resource which leads through all aspects of production
- \* excellent technical information

### Creating Digital Video

- \* an on-line guide prepared by Merle Marsh, Ed.D
- \* [www.computerlearning.org/articles/DVTech.htm](http://www.computerlearning.org/articles/DVTech.htm)
- \* includes links to: “Desktop Movies Reference Desk”; “Tips for Making Great Videos” and “10 Easy Steps to Creating Desktop Movies with iMovie”.

### Creating Video with Still Images

- \* an on-line tutorial
- \* [www.adobe.com/web/tips/lvmengine3/main.html](http://www.adobe.com/web/tips/lvmengine3/main.html)
- \* you'll need Adobe® Premiere®, Adobe Photoshop®, and Adobe LiveMotion™ to complete this tutorial.

### Creating a Video Message on the Cheap

- \* an on-line article by Ted Needleman written for Nonprofit Times
- \* [www.benton.org/Practice/Features/NPTimesAug2001.html](http://www.benton.org/Practice/Features/NPTimesAug2001.html)
- \* advice and information on creating a message video