Media Lab

INTRODUCTION TO DOCUMENTARY

TEACHER GUIDE

AFTRS

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OVERVIEW

In this practical and creative unit, students use their creative literacy skills to explore documentary filmmaking. The unit develops the students' understanding of story and encourages them to undertake activities that will develop their ability to plan, structure and complete media artworks that engage audiences. They will undertake critical and creative work, including writing, sound design and editing. Students will closely examine short documentary style films and create a short film of their own, individually or in groups.

USING THIS UNIT IN THE CLASSROOM

The Learning Resource includes an interconnected set of 10 linear sequences that can be completed in 2-3 weeks, or across an entire term. These range from introductory sequences looking at the history of the medium and analysing examples to guided activities and creative endeavours to allow students to put new skills to the test. The final sequences allow for reflection and the unit culminates with the screening of the created films. Teachers can opt to use some or all of the activities presented or can modify activities, content or modes of presentation to suit their needs.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Teachers may wish to assess learning in a variety of ways. To assist with this process, a range of possible assessment tasks and marking rubrics are outlined below. The unit has also been mapped to the NSW English and Media Arts syllabuses.

RESOURCES

There are a number of things students will need to be able to complete this unit though the exact specification will vary across schools. The suggested list of equipment is:

- Digital video or DSLR camera, tablet or smart phone – 1 for every 2-3 students
- Tripod per camera
- Computer with editing software (suggested software iMovie or for more advanced students Adobe Premiere Pro)
- Sound equipment: boom poles, microphones and if necessary iRigs to connect to tablets

MAP OF CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT

SEQUENCE	CONTENT	ACTIVITY	WORKSHEET	OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT
Sequence 1 What is a documentary film?	In this sequence, the students will participate in a set of introductory interactive activities aimed at ascertaining their background knowledge of documentary films and filmmaking. The techniques identified by the students through the activities will provide a starting point for this unit that explores the process of planning and producing a short documentary film. The overarching inquiry question and theme of this unit is "How do I share a story well?" Students will explore how filmmakers interview, film and use found footage to share stories with their audience. This sequence draws on the General Capabilities of Literacy and Personal and Social Capability.	Students will watch two short documentaries about a character or concept and will analyse the content provided, the film techniques used and the response of the audience to the content. **BBC News "Syrian Kids Explain the War"** 4min (interview style, title slates) – https://youtu.be/2iz2tNiRpeY **ABC "Thunderstorm Asthma"** 4 min (interview, voice over, science) – https://youtu.be/zluOAlsbI_I **SBS "First Contact - Elcho Island" (excerpt)** 3 min (observational, interview, voice over) – https://youtu.be/bp-9fH6NqR0	**Worksheet** Analysing a short documentary	Short film analysis task (see worksheet)
Sequence 2 Film technique and Camera Skills	This sequence allows students to learn about film technique and analyse why it is effective. They will then put these ideas into practice learning and consolidating camera skills in preparation for their documentary shoot. The focus will be on shot, angles and camera movement.	There is a short quiz in the worksheets to check levels of film literacy and an interview activity to allow students to put their learning into practice. Viewings of this footage will allow for both teacher and student evaluation of levels of learning.	**Worksheet** Camera Techniques for Documentary	Students fill in their "How to" guide as they go
Sequence 3 Screenwriting for Documentary	In this sequence students will look at the specific form of screenwriting for a documentary film, looking at both examples and the planning that goes into a script before it is written. They will examine the changes that occur between the PLANNING stages of a script and the EDITING stage and then put their knowledge into practice by writing a planning script for their documentary.	Students will discuss a sample script and answer questions about its style and usefulness to a filmmaker. They will write a planning script, using the suggested format described in the worksheets, for their documentary project.	**Worksheet** Screenwriting for Documentary	Students fill in their "How to" guide as they go

SEQUENCE	CONTENT	ACTIVITY	WORKSHEET	OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT
Sequence 4 Pre-production and Planning a film shoot	During this sequence students look at the idea of "preproduction" and the planning that occurs before a film shoot to make sure it runs smoothly. They will look at the idea of a checklist that will make sure they are prepared and then action these elements for their own film – location scouting, sound checks, shot lists, weather checks and equipment planning.	Students will fill out a variety of planning lists on their worksheet and this will involve them creating a shot list, an equipment list and test, researching weather forecasts and if possible doing location scouting.	**Worksheet** Preproduction Activities	Students fill in their "How to" guide as they go
Sequence 5 Ethics, Copyright and Safety	This sequence is about ethical discussion and analysis of the certain elements of the film process. Students look at issues of copyright, safety and permission and discuss these and plan for how they will conduct an ethical production themselves.	Students will complete a Risk Assessment of their film using the worksheet template and guidelines. They will also complete and ethical checklist related to copyright and permissions.	**Worksheet** Ethics, safety and copyright	Students fill in their "How to" guide as they go
Sequence 6 Sound	This sequence starts by looking at the types of sound used in film and then at the value of sound in film. Students are able to do this themselves by examining clips of films with and without sound, and with unusual sounds. They also listen to some of the most iconic soundtracks and can discuss the reasons that this music is so memorable. They can look behind the scenes and the sound design on Star Wars as well as planning their own musical and sound needs for their film.	Students will listen to and discuss clips from a range of sources, looking at whether or not sound is important in film. They can come to their own conclusions and then use these to plan the sound and music for their own films – creating it, if there is time in Garage band (or equivalent) or finding it on a copyright free music site (provided on worksheet).	**Worksheet** Sound	Students fill in their "How to" guide as they go
Sequence 7 Production and Interview skills	In this sequence, students prepare for their shoot, building on practical exercises in previous sequences. Students will learn the skills of interviewing as well as deciding on the focus of the documentary they are creating. They will spend time with their subject, plan and write interview questions and then prepare for a filmed interview. This sequence draws on the General Capabilities of Literacy and Personal and Social Capability.		**Worksheet** Interview Skills for Documentary	Students fill in their "How to" guide as they go

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SEQUENCE	CONTENT	ACTIVITY	WORKSHEET	OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT
Sequence 8 Data Management, Saving and Editing	This sequence teaches students some of the valuable skills they need to keep their footage safe and easy to access. They will learn the basics of uploading, saving and organising footage as well as looking at ways to map out an edit.	Students will fill out an editing map template, planning how they will put together their footage to create their film.	**Worksheets** Data Management and Saving and Preparing for an Edit, Editing	Students fill in their "how-to-guide" as they go
Sequence 9 Editing	This is the time for students to work on the editing of their documentary footage. The role of the teacher is to advise and be a sounding board, but students can mentor and help each other during this time as well.	Editing		Students fill in their "how-to-guide" as they go
Sequence 10 Presenting and Critiquing a Film	This sequence is the capstone of the unit and is the time when students not only present their final products but also take time to reflect on their process, what they have learned and look critically and their art as well as that of other students. Students will write and deliver an introduction to their film designed to consolidate their intent as well as their pride in their own work. It is a time for discussion guided by the teacher as well as some honest and simple written reflection as guided by the worksheets. There is potential for the teacher to make the screenings a special event.	Students will write and present a 100-word introduction to their film. After the viewing they will complete a written reflection on the film, prompted by questions on the worksheet.	**Worksheet** Presenting and Critiquing your own Film	Documentary Film Assessment How-to Guide to be handed in

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POSSIBLE ASSESSMENT DETAILS AND MARKING RUBRICS

Students may complete a series of formative assessment tasks to track their understanding throughout the unit and present these as part of their final assessment, compiled into a production folder. A part of this folder will be a receptive assessment that involves reflection upon short documentary films shown in class. The productive assessment task involves the creation of one documentary style film and a 'how-to' guide for other young filmmakers.

1 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS TASK

Using the worksheet and class discussion information, write an analysis of a short film shown in class

TASK: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS 20%	IN PROGRESS	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Student can identify and comment on the focus of the documentary and the way information is selected and used to highlight that focus				
Student can identify and comment on elements of film craft used and why they are effective				
Student can articulate a personal opinion on a documentary film and discuss their learning process				
Report is neat, well presented with few spelling or grammatical mistakes.				

2 DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING TASK

Create a 2-3 minute documentary about an individual you are interested in. Focus on one area of their lives or achievements and use interviews, photos and footage to share their story as a film. Students will write, direct, produce and edit the film. Teachers can decide if this is an individual project or a group project

TASK: DOCUMENTARY FILM 60%	IN PROGRESS	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Focus of the documentary is clear and the subject is well explored, giving them a chance to speak for themselves and for their story to explored.				
Students plan and prepares well for production and production runs smoothly and to time.				

TASK: DOCUMENTARY FILM 60%	IN PROGRESS	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Student understands film craft and captures a variety of shots in different styles appropriate to the content.				
Script is written on time in the correct format, is adapted as necessary and provides necessary structure for planning productions.				
Student is aware of safety risks and plans to minimise these. Student acts ethically at all time times throughout the production process.				
Sound is well captured and designed. Music is appropriate and ethically sourced. Sound effects are employed to maximum effect.				
Film is edited carefully, accurately and in a way that highlights the story.				
Film is well presented with no errors in spelling on screen or in the credits. Credits are accurate and all music, footage is accurately acknowledged.				

3   WRITE A "HOW-TO GUIDE" FOR OTHER FILMMAKERS ON DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

Create a 500 word, 10-step guide for other filmmakers using your experience making your own film to inform the information you share. Mention any lessons you learned along the way as well as any things that could go wrong or save time

TASK: HOW-TO GUIDE 20%	IN PROGRESS	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Student delivers a 10-step guide of approximately 500 words that examines and describes the documentary filmmaking process.				
Student can identify and comment on the filmmaking process and describe the steps clearly.				
Student can articulate their own learning experience and comment on weaknesses, strengths, failures and successes.				
Guide is neat, well presented with few spelling or grammatical mistakes.				

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CONNECTION TO CURRICULUM

CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS - ACELA	CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS – MEDIA ARTS	SEQUENCES
Understand the way language evolves to reflect a changing world, particularly in response to the use of new technology for presenting texts and communicating. ACELA1528 Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose. ACELY1721 Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance. ACELA1764 Analyse and explain the effect of technological innovations on texts, particularly media texts. ACELY1765 Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources. ACELY1723	Examine the ways in which audiences make meaning and how different audiences engage with and share media artworks. Explore meaning and interpretation, forms and elements including structure, intent, character, settings, points of view, genre conventions and media conventions as they make and respond to media artworks. Analyse how technical and symbolic elements are used in media artworks to create representations influenced by story, genre, values and points of view of particular audiences.	1, 10
Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts. ACELT1619		1, 7
Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view. ACELT1620	Build on their understanding of structure, intent, character, settings, points of view and genre conventions and explore media conventions in their media artworks	1, 10
	Maintain safety in use of technologies and in interaction with others, including the use of images and works of others. Develop ethical practices and consider regulatory issues when using technology. Present media artworks for different community and institutional contexts with consideration of ethical and regulatory issues.	5

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CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS - ACELA	CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS – MEDIA ARTS	SEQUENCES
Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts. ACELT1621		1, 7, 10
Use interaction skills when discussing and presenting ideas and information, selecting body language, voice qualities and other elements (for example, music and sound) to add interest and meaning. ACELY1804	Students build on their understanding and use of time, space, sound, movement, lighting and technologies.	7, 8
Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements to promote a point of view or enable a new way of seeing. ACELY1720	Plan, structure and design media artworks that engage audiences. Students produce representations of social values and points of view in media artworks for particular audiences and contexts. They use genre and media conventions and shape technical and symbolic elements for specific purposes and meaning. They collaborate with others in design and production processes, and control equipment and technologies to achieve their intentions.	10
Compare the text structures and language features of multimodal texts, explaining how they combine to influence audiences. ACELY1724		1, 3
Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual and audio features to convey information and ideas. ACELY1725	Develop and refine media production skills to shape the technical and symbolic elements of images, sounds and text for a specific purpose and meaning.	5, 7, 10
Edit for meaning by removing repetition, refining ideas, reordering sentences and adding or substituting words for impact. ACELY1726	Experiment with the organisation of ideas to structure stories through media conventions and genres to create points of view in images, sounds and text.	9
Use a range of software, including word processing programs, to confidently create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts. ACELY1728		1 – 10