

2016 WAND SMALL GRANTS SCHEME FINAL REPORT

Project Leader: Ms Tania Visosevic Team: Ms Amanda Myers	Lead Institution: Edith Cowan University	
Project Title: How to create a video essay: Assignment of the future!		
Budget: \$6000	Spent: \$5880	Balance: \$120

Main outcomes and achievements of the project

A literature review that defines the Video Essay, a video production on “How to do a Video Essay” and a resource package that is generic in content to accommodate different teaching areas across creative industries.

The Video Essay Resource package contains:

- the student-produced video production on “How to do a Video Essay,”
- exemplars of academic Video Essays;
- examination of individual modes in multimodality;
- resources in video production skills,
- copyright, referencing and creative commons information;
- Student activities and an example assessment rubric (based on Australia Qualifications Framework)

The package is hosted by the ECU’s library guides SpringShare platform with online access.

The dissemination event will take place at Edith Cowan University Mt Lawley campus.

Other outcomes include presentations at eCulture (ECU Joondalup), Teaching and Learning forum (Curtin University), CREATEC (ECU Mt Lawley) and the 2017 Association of Visual Pedagogy Conference (Aalborg University, Denmark).

Executive Summary

At Edith Cowan University in Western Australia, the Video Essay has been trialed as an assessment alternative for film students. Students were given the option to compose a Video Essay or traditional text based essay for an assessment. Those students who took on the creative challenge of working with the Video Essay were enthusiastic at the opportunity to work with the medium and language of film. However, some students immediately fell into writing a traditional essay and recorded the content as a narration and applied corresponding images. On reflection, it demonstrated that this was not the most effective approach to introduce the Video Essay and students didn’t explore the potential of working multimodally.

From this trial, we realized that there was a need to investigate the pedagogical application of the Video Essay and introduce activities that targeted the elements of multimodality. A preliminary investigation of the literature established a definition of the Video Essay; examined knowledge

acquisition and multiliteracy skills through multimodal composition, and identified issues inherent in the Video Essay. These issues included copyright matters, academic rigour and assessment rubrics. To create an effective pedagogical framework to the Video Essay the New London Group theories in multiliteracies, multimodality and knowledge processes was applied (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). The result of this investigation is the Video Essay Resource package.

There are advantages to using video in education, the Video Essay being a more sophisticated multimodal form offering authentic learning opportunities for students. Students can experience challenges and benefits when composing multimodally. They need to negotiate, apply, and integrate individual modes to coordinate and transfer “multiple semiotic resources” to convey meaning in an academic way to an audience (DePalma & Alexander, 2015, p. 182). Translating meaning into multiple modes can be ‘messy’ learning and requires problem solving skills which can promote metacognitive thinking (VanKooten & Berkley, 2016). The creative challenge of using images/sound to communicate a topic makes it more involving and insightful, encouraging academic rigour from an analytical and research-based perspective.

The Video Essay is a “supertool” for learning (Bruce & Chiu, 2015) and takes advantage of the existing production skills of students and combines it with multimodality and critical enquiry. We foresee the potential for the Video Essay form to facilitate learning and teaching practices across disciplines in the creative industries. With the launch of the Video Essay Resource package in June 2017, we hope to encourage academics to embrace the Video Essay as an assessment option for their teaching and to gain further insight into the Video Essay through future research and publications.

Recommendations for future investigation

Copyright matters, teaching and learning activities around multimodality and assessment rubrics. We recommend collecting survey data with classes of students that undertake the video essay as an assessment for the first time. This would assist with further research around transformative learning.