

## **Production Work and Critique**

This year I was part of a team from Professor Roberts' Media Production I class that produced a Portrait/Place video about a student named Jordan Hunter. What made Jordan a unique subject to interview was his specific role as a Dungeon Master in the game Dungeons and Dragons. Our goal was to shed some light on the negative stereotype associated with Dungeons and Dragons, and to show that Jordan and his friends really aren't that bizarre. While I do feel that the final product successfully met our program objective, I also feel that we could have improved some production elements in order to further elucidate our message.

The main production element in this project was a properly composed interview, and for this assignment, the interview was supposed drive the piece. So, an interview with minimal flaws was vital to the success of our video. The first thing that made our interview well composed was Jordan's placement in the frame. We made sure to place Jordan according to the rule of thirds, we gave him adequate headroom, and we made sure he wasn't "magnetized" to any of the frame edges. Along with frame placement, we also relied on the use mise-en-scène in the interview to provide visual meaning. In Jordan's interview, he is wearing a Grand Valley t-shirt, blue jeans, and he is relaxed in a dorm chair. His costume and blocking visually show the viewer that he is a typical college student. Lastly, near the end of the video, we chose to move the interview from a long shot to a close up on his face. This move was properly placed in the sequence because this switch helps the viewer to feel a more intimate connection to Jordan.

Another crucial ingredient to our video's success was the seamless integration of the video and audio tracks. For this project we chose to utilize a music track throughout the entire piece. The music's light and enchanting melody helps set a pleasant mood, and as a result, the viewers' emotions are positively heightened. However, we made sure to never let the music dominate the piece or overpower Jordan's interview, but rather to accompany it and subtly move it

along. Also, I feel our group did an excellent job matching the content of B-roll footage to the content of Jordan's interview. This helped to give greater depth to Jordan's description of the game.

Unfortunately there were some aspects of our production that didn't work so well and that could have been improved. One of these aspects was the discontinuity in lighting. Our interview was illuminated with the SV Quartz lighting kit, and the footage of the game play was lit with the fluorescent lights present in the dorm room. Because these two sources of light have different color temperatures, the white images appeared differently colored when they weren't properly white balanced. This occurred during the filming of the Dungeons and Dragons game play. Throughout the filming we would occasionally forget to white balance, and as a result, some of the game play footage creates an uneasy contrast with the footage from the interview. When compared to the warm tone of the interview, the people at the Dungeons and Dragons game look unappealing and ghoulish from the green-blue colored light.

There were many other compositional problems within the production of our video. Many times during the filming, we wouldn't stay within the correct depth of field. Because of this much of our B-roll consisted of unfocused shots that could not be used. We also neglected to check our equipment to test our equipment before shooting. This unwise decision left us with an unwanted hiss in our interview audio that would have to be dealt with in postproduction.

Overall, I feel that this assignment was a building block in my knowledge of video production techniques. It is this assignment that I have paid the closest attention to compositional details and nuances. I also feel that there are many aspects of the production that were overlooked, but now recognized in retrospect. Nevertheless, through recognizing and analyzing the production's strong points and weak points, I am able to walk into my future projects with a new confidence and understanding of video production.