

Kuyasa-

Where the Sun rises

Self Reflective

At the beginning of the year, starting with our first assignment, we as a group made sure that for each assignment we rotated functions. This time around I was the editor. The Editor. On my own, by myself. For a 24 minute documentary. 24 MINUTES. No sleep for me then.

The staff and principal at Kuyasa School for Special Needs were extremely helpful and kept their doors wide open for the duration of the term. When we went there and mentioned what we wanted to do, Jill Rothman, the principal, was forthcoming with ideas and information about possible children that we could use as the characters for our documentary. We wanted to focus on a child from each 'stream'. There are three streams of those who have got special needs and they are separated according to the ways in which their disability affects their ability to function in the outside world. Thus you get low-functioning, semi-functioning and those that are able to work in a structured environment. We wanted to focus on one child from each stream and to find out how their disability affects them and how their parents and teachers cope.

However, I really found that sometimes journalists need to be insensitive to the people that they work with in order to get results. When Jill Rothman had an understanding of what we wanted she began listing children to us like they were inventory. I know that that is a crude and reductionist way of looking at the situation, Jill is a very caring and sensitive woman, but for our needs and due to the short space of time within which we had to work (I would have preferred to really spend time with the children and then find characters from there), that was the fastest way to choose. We had to be insensitive when choosing, but we really had to be sensitive to the topic when we began filming. Personally I feel that Thami did an excellent job at communicating with the children (they all only spoke isiXhosa).

As the filming got underway I stopped going along on the shoots. I would look at the

footage as it was filmed and I gave my feedback to Jenny (camera) and Thami (director). I think that this process worked well for us as it meant that when I began capturing, logging and editing the footage I was looking at it for the first time and it was still fresh and exciting for me. If I had gone along on all the shoots, and if Jenny and Thami sat and helped me edit, we would have all started to lose interest in the piece. I think that the way we separated roles and rotated for each assignment means that now we know where our strengths and weaknesses are, we are able to perform each of the task to a certain extent, some better than others.

The ten minute investigative documentary that we had to complete in second term really helped us in terms of our camera work and sound. The camera work that Jenny did on this assignment was very neat and that made my job much easier. I think the most important thing to remember about group work is that we have to trust each other's ability and to trust that we are all working towards the same goal and we will all do our best to get there. Personally I think that this is what makes us work as a group is that we put all of our personal issues aside and we work together as a group to produce one quality product.

As editor I was just slightly daunted by the huge task ahead of me. I was worried that with 24 minutes I would get lost in all the footage and content we had and that I would be able to sustain a solid structure for 24 minutes. So I made sure that all the interviews were transcribed and that on paper I had a structure and I knew where I wanted to go even before I touched the mouse. This meant that I worked section by section, and made sure that sections flowed into one another fluidly. One thing I was afraid was that there was going to be too much 'talking heads' and that I was going to lose the attention of the viewer. But I also did not want to put visuals over anything just for the sake of it. In the end I think that there was a good balance between so-called 'talking heads' and cutaways.

I think that this documentary is a good reflection of the way that Thami, Jenny and I work together. We each add something different to the work as we all have different personalities and backgrounds.