

Reflective Report
Self Assessment
Project: Wheel Turn

I am going to use the Assessment Criterion Reference Grid to firstly reflect on my particular role in the production process and secondly as a member of the wider crew, Rat Race Productions.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

TECHNICAL

Sound and Camera Work:

For this production cycle it was decided that I would do the sound on shoots. Theresa was the camera person and Peter was the director. I found sound to be a very challenging portfolio but ultimately it was rewarding to learn a lot about this complex aspect of the television medium. As the majority of our interviews were filmed outside, the choice of sound equipment had to be chosen to accommodate this volatile environment. Since my knowledge of the various microphone options, at the start of our shooting, was not as extensive as it could have been the first two shoots were very stressful. Our intensive shooting schedule which often began at 4am and ended at 10pm was also a factor in this. I was the second camera person on the day that we shot the qualifying match for our closing sequence. Despite the 32 degree heat I thoroughly enjoyed my first experience of filming a game of sport. Previous camera work enabled a confidence to shoot this game well, despite the quick shot and camera movement changes that this type of shoot requires. I think for the first time I experienced that complete connection between myself as the camera person, the camera and the people I was shooting. It was devoid of distractions and people telling me what to do and me feeling unsure.

CONCEPTUAL

The initial spark for this idea came from an American documentary entitled *Murderball*. Even though we may have borrowed from the basic structure of the *Murderball* story, our concerted effort to edit the piece with a South African social awareness reflected gives

our documentary an originality. We wanted to challenge the accepted notion that people with physical disabilities lead less active and productive lives than able-bodied people. Through the focus of wheelchair basketball we profiled people living with disabilities to explore and ultimately subvert the afore-mentioned notion. We decided on the basic structure at the beginning and stuck to it. We profiled people from two opposing sides who met at a provincial qualifying game that was our closing sequence. At times I often felt a pull to cover other angles and story leads that interacting with these people provided but I think what we stuck to was good. We did face a difficult conceptual challenge when we had to re-edit our piece but it strengthened the content and brought us into the editing process as three equal players.

INTERPERSONAL

Due to language barriers, we found it difficult to connect with the wheelchair basketball side from East London. This had been our experience when putting together the investigative documentary *Cost of Death*. Although our team of focus from the start had been the Eastern Spears, the difficulty with communicating with the East London side confirmed this. It is a pity that that we did not spend more time with the Border Brumbies because their stories were extremely interesting. Their provincial and national success as athletes dealing with disability and poverty I found to be quite inspiring.

REFLECTION AS A CREW MEMBER

TECHNICAL

As I have mentioned doing sound was a stressful portfolio. We had to make role changes in interviews that needed the boom pole as I couldn't hold the pole and monitor sound at the same time. This caused frustration with my team as these changes should have been made earlier. In reflection, I think the roles should have been considered more carefully. I feel that I would have made a better director and Peter a better sound engineer. I also learnt during this project the importance of the relationship between the camera person and the sound person. As a lot of our shooting was of basketball matches the camera person was required to move a lot. This of course means the sound person too. On our

first shoot it was a disaster with Theresa constantly moving and me trying to follow her and anticipate her next move. This did get better as we filmed more. We also increasingly focused on perfecting interview sound and using the camera mic for game sound. Music was planned as the backing for game sequences so ambient sound was not a huge priority. .

CONCEPTUAL

This is where we as a group faced our greatest challenge. At near completion of our edit we were told to start again, paying closer attention to narrative structure. This frustrated me a lot. Many of the issues, regarding our storyline, that our executive producer articulated I had mentioned during filming but they fell on deaf ears. Yet I believe we needed to go through this process of re-editing to make us all better documentary filmmakers and grow a stronger group dynamic. The time of doing our edit again is where I feel I was able to show my group my strength in conceptualising and narrative building. With this time of putting together new story lines and character portrayals I finally felt I was contributing in the way I wanted to.

INTERPERSONAL

Yet again our group dynamic was a constant challenge. Though I think as the intensity of the weeks grew we pulled together more successful. We managed to merge our different visions of the project and put aside our personal differences to complete our final group project for the year.