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Use of a video based instruction program to enhance English literature and writing concepts

Jeffrey Christian Pitcher

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USE OF A VIDEO BASED INSTRUCTION PROGRAM TO ENHANCE
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND WRITING CONCEPTS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Instructional Technology

by
Jeffrey Christian Pitcher
June 2005
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Approved by:

Dr. Brian Newberry, First Reader

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23 May 05
ABSTRACT

This project was designed to provide background information pertaining to the study of John Steinbeck’s works in a Freshman English program at Yucaipa High School’s Freshman Campus. A Digital Versatile Disk was compiled to create an awareness regarding Steinbeck’s roots in California and to involve students in original writing projects associated with the author.

With the aid of some literary authorities in the Monterey area, namely David Baumgarten, Kalisa Moore, and Neal Hotelling, The Steinbeck House committee and The National Steinbeck Center, this instructional DVD was compiled with one learning objective being an appreciation of the manner in which Steinbeck interacted with the local people and places that inspired his fiction. The second learning objective was for students to participate in writing exercises which mirrored the types of writing that John Steinbeck had employed in his fiction and prose.

Theory and practice outlining principles for the creation and utilization of instructional video was studied by this author. Educational theory was applied into the product’s design, including the use of video technology to create and solidify a frame of reference for literature content and writing activities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is dedicated to my wife, Lauri, who put up with all of the false starts and all of the false endings.

I'd like to acknowledge Dr. Newberry, who doesn't get paid enough to deal with students as needy as I am.
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

In response to the call for reform in English education, the California State Department of Education has created a set of English standards as "content students need to master." This DVD project will be grounded in the English standards and will go beyond them to be a resource which can be utilized in Freshman level English classes at Yucaipa High School. It is designed to encourage both reading and writing as well as to introduce different writing styles as practiced by the classic author John Steinbeck. This supplement will greatly enhance student understanding of Steinbeck, in particular, as an author and the influences that authors in general have upon their writings. Finally, it will lead students to an exploration of their own influences as readers and writers.

Statement of the Problem

The English curriculum at Yucaipa High School's Freshman Campus includes the coverage and analysis of a novel by John Steinbeck entitled Of Mice and Men. At present, an informative documentary which chronicles the
rich Central California background of John Steinbeck is not included in the available reference materials at the school. This project will function as an informative virtual visit to the Monterey and Salinas Valley areas with a special focus on Steinbeck’s connection to them.

Additionally, many high school students do not always have the ability to relate to people, places, or events which have occurred long ago in our nation’s history. There is a need for a resource which places novels into contexts which students can relate to. Any resource that can act as a link between unknown people, places, or historic events and known elements of same will be invaluable to help students make the kinds of connections they need to make. After these cognitive connections are established, students will be able to respond more confidently and intelligently in writing to various related prompts.

John Steinbeck wrote in many different styles and used many different methods to gather and present information on the written page. One problem that has led to an area of need is that many Freshman students have had only limited opportunities or motivation to write in different styles. For example, some students may have produced exclusively thematic compositions while others
may have concentrated mainly on creative writing at the middle school level. Many times this is the result of teacher preference rather than student need. A resource which provides a true diversity of writing experiences to the students would be beneficial to the English curriculum at Yucaipa High School.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project is to develop an educational DVD in which the influences and writing styles of John Steinbeck are examined and then practiced in the production of contemporary student writings. In an essay entitled "The Politics of Teleliteracy," Currie-Tash (1998), a Freshman interdisciplinary program teacher, states that "The new standards for the English Language Arts challenge us to expand the scope of our conception of literacy. The addition of media literacy offers opportunities for us to connect with our students' lived culture and extend the significance and relevance of a classic text..." (p. 48). In the same vein, the ultimate purpose of this Masters project is to provide a bridge between the world of Steinbeck’s generation and the world students live in today. This bridge will be crossed through first analyzing and emulating the writing styles
of Steinbeck and next creating original writings which reflect reality today. In short, this project is intended to be used as a vehicle for the enhancement of student understanding of Steinbeck's life and times. Moreover, it is also to be utilized as a frame of reference for the production of original student writing which reflects this understanding. Through analysis and emulation of Steinbeck's diverse repertoire of writing styles, students will expand their own writing experiences and experiment with differing methods of composition. In doing this, students may enjoy, rather than endure, the process of writing artistically.

Significance of the Project

Communication in a variety of forms can and should include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This project is significant because information delivered via DVD or videotape can help students to "generate relevant questions about readings, synthesize content and ideas from several sources dealing with a single issue or written by a single author" and "extend ideas presented in primary or secondary sources through original analysis, evaluation, and elaboration" (California Language Arts Content Standards, 1999, #2.3, 2.4, 2.5).
In addition to conforming to these reading-based standards, video can also be an impetus for literary response. Logical assumptions are that students, through the use of an effective video-based educational resource would be able to "analyze how a work of literature is related to the themes and issues of its historical period" and "synthesize information from multiple sources" (California Language Arts Content Standards, 1999, #3.12, 1.5). A well produced video-based project can and does lend itself to the presenting of a smooth, coherent synthesis of an author's work and will also serve as a strong stimulus for analytic classroom discussion or written response. Hobbs (1998) states that "students' ability to recall, remember, and comprehend information was dramatically improved as a result of media literacy" (p. 17). These conclusions were based upon research with ninth graders, which happens to be the same age group as the target audience for this Masters project.

Limitations

During the development of the project, a few limitations were noted. These limitations are the following:
1. Initial footage shot in Monterey and Salinas did not conform to the revised direction that the video was taking which necessitated a trip during late March of 2005 to tape footage more specifically aligned to the instructional writing objectives desired.

2. Student results were predicted to vary due to varying levels of writing proficiency within the Freshman English classroom. A limited number of students were available to test the initial versions of the DVD. Because of this, not all student skill levels could be represented in the testing. For example, many Resource Specialist Program students existed in the current student population and these students possessed much more rudimentary skill levels in writing than the average English 9 student. Therefore, adult English teachers trained to teach at differing levels of proficiency were used to test the project and rate its efficiency as an educational tool.

3. The project was produced for use on a DVD player and, at present, very few English teachers have DVD players in their classrooms. This should not
be a problem as schools begin to equip their teachers with the latest technology. Currently there are two out of five English teachers who have DVD players in their classrooms. Therefore, copies of the project will have to be made on VHS as well for the upcoming school year.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project.

**Bin** - the storage area for clips which have not yet been used on the timeline.

**Buy-out music** - music for which the license has been purchased for use as background music on video projects.

**Exporting** - Sending video out to a recording source such as tape or DVD using firewire.

**Firewire** - the Apple Computing trademarked name for a data transfer system defined by the IEEE 1394 specification, featuring digital transfer rates of up to 400 megabits per second. Firewire is rapidly becoming a standard in the computing industry for transferring data to and from digital recording devices.
**iDVD** - the DVD authoring software used to create the DVD’s navigational system and menu interface.

**iMac** - the type of computer used to create the project.

**iMovie** - the editing program used to produce the project.

**Importing** - the process of capturing footage to a computer’s video editing program by using firewire.

**Shooting** - the process of gathering footage from a location.

**Timeline** - the editing interface used to organize and edit clips on. Titles and transitions are also added here.

**WALLDO**—short for “Wide, Angled, Low, Linking, Depth, and Opposite” shot selection. Remembering the “WALLDO” concept ensures the gathering of footage according to the principles of advanced broadcast camera technique. Each videographer on a shoot should incorporate these types of shots in order to maintain a professional look and feel to video productions.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

English reading and writing instruction and video technology have not always gone well together in the past. Specifically, it has been asserted that students routinely eschew reading and writing in favor of watching a videotape or DVD presentation. However, these tools of the present must be embraced by educators as valuable pieces of assistive technology that can be harnessed to educate our children more effectively. Sirc (1985) states that technology "can only serve effectively, in terms of a general pedagogical tool, as a medium for response rather than as a respondent" (p. 70). Technology, including video technology, can stimulate students and elicit extremely creative writing response but is limited in its ability to provide feedback. The human element is still better for that. Nevertheless, when used wisely and judiciously toward an educative end, video technology can help to create an effective culture of learning in a classroom.

Cennamo and Kalk (2005) cite constructivism in stating that "knowledge is individually constructed as learners attempt to make sense of their world by acting on
objects or by deriving meaning through social cues” (p. 74). They state that a dog, for instance, is only identifiable as a dog within a particular context. Children learn early on that an animal fits into the hierarchy of man/animal relationships at a lower level than a person does. Another example is the differentiation of the concept of a cow in the United States and a cow in India; a culture in which cows are considered holy animals to be revered. These differing perspectives are examples of what is referred to as “frame of reference.”

In layman’s terms, a frame of reference is an outlook on something or a way of understanding something weighed against past experiences. People who travel to a foreign land often experience “culture shock” largely because of differing frames of reference. The need always exists to create a frame of reference for more effective learning to take place. Keene and Zimmerman (1997) point out that “To relate unfamiliar text to (student) prior world knowledge and/or personal experience, these connections generally take three forms: text to self-connections, text to text connections, and text to world connections” (p. 55). With costs for field trips becoming prohibitive because of educational budget crunches, virtual journeys through
video will have to serve to provide these connections more and more.

California English Language Frameworks

For a full understanding of how English is taught in the state of California, it is crucial to note that writing and reading comprehension are interrelated in an English classroom. The California English Language Arts Framework, in fact, delineated its four areas of emphasis as "reading, writing, speaking, and listening" (p. 2). It states that "The framework calls for a literature based program that encourages reading and exposes all students to significant literary works" (p. 3). In terms of a prescribed way to teach writing, the framework calls for "A writing program that includes attention to the various stages of the writing process—from prewriting through postwriting" (p. 3). The writing process itself follows a somewhat rigid format but is also flexible enough to allow for teachers to exercise some freedom of choice when teaching lessons.

The Process of Writing

The California Education Department's Model Curriculum Standards sets forth the following proviso: "All students will learn that writing is a process that
includes stages called prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing” (p. vii).

Prewriting could involve drawing pictures, dialectic (two sided quotation/response) journals, clustering or web-style brainstorming, topic discussion lead-ins, and so forth. Drafting involves developing the prewriting into a written rough draft. Revising concerns the fluency of ideas while editing is primarily focused on the mechanics of writing such as spelling and grammar. A final draft is the end product: a paper that has followed the writing process. It is usually focused and relatively error-free.

Is this the best way to teach writing? Burke (1999) states that “the process is a product and that product is the result and the final measure of the quality of the process” (p. 75). A quality essay must cover all steps of the writing process but also must allow for some freedom on the writer’s part to explore without at first worrying about writing a grammatically perfect paper. In fact, Romano (1987) observes that, “Mastery of editing skills will not ensure the production of high quality writing” (p. 79). This focus on editing and revision as necessary but secondary functions of the writing process is a key component in the way process-based papers are written in high school English classrooms currently.
Experiential Writing

One important school of thought in the teaching of writing is that students should and do write from the perspectives of their own individual experiences. The implication for the classroom is that teachers should provide students with a variety of reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences to ensure that writing can reflect this diversity of thought. Central to the act of writing from experience is recording that experience in some way so that it does not escape the memory. That is done many times by the simple act of keeping a journal.

Macrorie (1987) notes that "The conclusion of most of the teachers and students using (journals) is that journals get people thinking, they help them test their own experience against the ideas of many others and...as they become more engaged, they often write more clearly" (p. 95). Burke (1999) is in favor of encouraging the connection of a reader to a text by utilizing "dialectic journals or reader response logs" which are "designed to force student readers to enter into and engage meaningfully with the text" (p. 102). It should be noted that many famous authors, including John Steinbeck, were pioneers of the experiential method of gathering information to write both fiction and nonfiction pieces.
This practice continues amongst the elite authors of today.

**Fiction and Nonfiction**

Students should write both nonfiction and fiction pieces in English classrooms. Bateson (1990) compares life to knitting a multicolored quilt in saying, “Composing a life involves an openness to possibilities and the capacity to put them together in a way that is structurally sound” (p. 165). The same is true of any English class. Composition teachers should structure units which run the gamut, in terms of student writing, from real-world documents to fiction (poetry, plays, and stories) to nonfiction news reporting and log-keeping.

Topics for writing fiction or nonfiction are as diverse as the topics of conversation. One principle that is valuable to communicate to young writers is Covey’s (1989) advice to “Begin with the end in mind” (p. 169). Each piece of writing should have a clear purpose, whether it is to entertain, to report information, or to present a thesis. Only when students are clear thinkers can coherent compositional and creative writing skills develop without trouble.
Video-based Instruction

Back in 1970, Postman envisioned a future in which “The major effort of the school would be to assist students in achieving what has been called multimedia literacy.” The school library would “contain books but at least as many films, records, videotapes, audiotapes and computer programs” (p. 250). He may have been one of the first people to coin the term “multimedia” but his fantastic vision of the future has come close to the reality of 2005. Many, if not most, students do now spend more time interacting with television in the form of DVD material and video games than they do reading books or magazines.

Educators are left to either lament the prospect of a television-decayed and illiterate society or to prepare themselves actively to teach in the exciting and newly technological world. Much more recently, Postman (1995) again sounded off on the subject by observing, “What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one” (p. 203).

Luckily, such dim views of the future of education have been offset by the fact that students are indeed
learning to read and write in this technological age. In fact, there may be more need for an educated populace than ever now that more people will be working in computer-based industries. The key advantage of video-based educational content, in particular, lies in its capacity to be perfectly organized. Caine and Caine (1994) cite discoveries in brain based research which indicate that "information presented in a logical, organized manner helps students make a wider range of connections between the new information and what they already know, thus increasing their capacity to learn and remember" (p. 288).

McLuhan (1957) prophetically illustrated the transition in teaching style that must now actually occur by stating, "...most learning occurs outside the classroom. The sheer quantity of information conveyed by (the media) far exceeds the quantity of information conveyed by school instruction and texts. This challenge has destroyed the monopoly of the book as a teaching aid and cracked the very walls of the classroom" (pp. 278-279). This can be seen in a positive light as Judy (1981) has noted that, "After years of either ignoring media or using them merely as audio-visual aids,
teachers have discovered media, recognizing them as important resources for teaching” (p. 280).

**Visual Literacy and Media Literacy**

According to Pennings, “Visual literacy is an emerging area of study which deals with what can be seen and how we interpret what is seen” (Pennings, 2003, para. 1). He continues by stating that, “It is approached from a range of disciplines that: study the physical processes involved in visual perception, use technology to represent visual imagery, and develop intellectual strategies to interpret and understand what is seen (Pennings, 2003, para. 2). Central to Pennings’ view is the concept that “the ability to make sense of the world is largely a process we learn from our cultural environment” (Pennings, 2003, para. 7). Hence, any success through video or technological means to expand student exposure to different cultural environments (including time periods of the past) can only result in an increase in overall visual literacy. Nevertheless, in a society which interacts more with television than with the written word, visual literacy and the ability to understand it becomes crucial for teachers who want to bridge the gap between the two.
Closely connected to any project produced to be viewed on a televised medium is the concept of media literacy. Leveranz and Tyner (1993) define media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms" (p. 21). This almost exclusive definition of media literacy illustrates just how well media, or the elements of media such as videotaped instruction, can fit in with the California State English Standards.

**A Case Study**

Krueger (1998) reported the following result after she embraced and implemented the concept of visual literacy in her high school English classroom. "After having completed thorough analysis of both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Lord of the Flies*, my students were given the task of analyzing the themes of adolescence and the family in films ... Once the presentations began, the classroom transformed. Students became responsible for their own learning" (p. 18). In this case, the teacher designed a lesson involving video analysis and achieved success primarily because she did her planning with an educational objective in mind. Students tend to interact with materials presented on videotape with a greater familiarity than they do with only text-based materials.
This may allow for a deeper examination of difficult thematic materials in English classes. As Judy (1981) noted, "Films are excellent sources of writing ideas, and many fit naturally into literature units, either following or leading into an exploration of a literary work" (p. 285).

Instructional Design

Instructional Design, for video production, encompasses not only the main elements of a program, consisting of audio and video components, but also a solid base in instructional design theory. If an element in a video does not educate or serve to illuminate a point designed to teach something, then it distracts and detracts from the ultimate goal.

The Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation Model

The success or failure of learning through video based material could well rest upon whether or not the creator of the instructional tool has a concept of how to employ visual stimuli to its greatest educational advantage. One way to ensure that this occurs is to work within a system, which is defined by Dick, Carey, & Carey as a "set of interrelated parts, all of which work together toward a defined goal" (p. 3). Systems and their
components act as checks and balances toward the production of a sound educational tool.

No matter what the instructional aid being produced is, it benefits from a grounding in design model theory. One such theory is the ADDIE model. The ADDIE model, posited by Cennamo and Kalk (2005) and based on Lohr (2003) and Seels and Glasgow (1998) is a front-running model for educational design. ADDIE is an acronym for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (p. 4). These steps, according to Cennamo and Kalk, when applied to projects “do not unfold in a linear fashion. Instead, instructional designers refine their understanding of learners, outcomes, assessments, activities, and evaluation throughout the design process” (p. 5).

Cennamo and Kalk (2005) lay out a very complex set of criteria for the elements of instructional design as filtered through the ADDIE model. Analysis “includes needs assessment, identification of the goal, and learner, task, context, goal, and subordinate skill analysis” (p. 4). For example, a writing teacher may use knowledge of student writing proficiencies, deficiencies, and experiences to help with the analysis phase of design.
The next stage is the Design stage in which objectives are developed, along with an instructional strategy and test items (p. 4). This gives way to Development which "includes preparation of instructional materials" (p. 4). "Activities in support of the delivery of instruction" (p. 4) are put forth in the Implementation stage and, finally, "Evaluation includes formative and summative evaluations" (p. 4). This system presumably works well with many different types of instructional design tools and seems ideally suited to the production of educational video in particular.

Producing Educational Video

Fidler (1997) outlined a few major categories in producing educational video; namely "Production Objectives" and "Script and Production Design" (Fidler, 1997, para. 1). Both categories were grounded in practical advice for the educational video designer. Fidler encourages the freedom for the video producer to work creatively as long as the objective of educating the student is achieved.

For example, the author stresses the importance of keeping objectives limited with an "educational attitude." His approach adopts a "show, don't tell" methodology in which feelings are made implicitly obvious through music,
gestures, or actions instead of direct statements like, "I'm feeling happy" or "I'm feeling angry." Elaborate production quality is eschewed in favor of the simplistic for maximum educational impact. Though admittedly juvenile oriented examples, "Sesame Street" and its flashy transitions contrast with the gentle flow of "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood." Both are successful examples of educational programming but an educational video director must walk the fine line between stimulation and learning. Learning cannot occur without some degree of stimulation to hold a learner's interest. Even so, a stylistic choice must be made as to how to stimulate enough to educate but not so much as to detract from the overall message.

The implications for video producers are obvious. Though many editing programs contain many flashy transitions and graphics to wow the viewer, overuse of these in an educational video would work against the maintenance of audience focus and could, ultimately, diminish the educational value of the presentation.

Severin (1967) postulates the "Cue Summation Theory" which claims that "learning is more effective as the number of available cues or stimuli are increased" (p. 15). This statement, taken at face value, appears to oppose Fidler's perspective. However, few professional
video producers would argue that visual stimuli should not be reinforced with an appropriate audio component. Severin continues, however, and begins to support Fidler’s point of view in warning the potential video designer that "...when cross channel cues are irrelevant, this will result in inferior communication" (p. 15). The sound, in other words, should reinforce the image or help to convey the emotion appropriate to that image.

Furthermore, both the sound and the image should have, as their ultimate goal, a clear instructional message. As Severin states, “Multiple channel communication is effective when the cues have meaning” (p. 233) and this meaning can be safely interpreted to indicate educational substance.

In all professional educational video-based supplements, the visual and the aural segments should complement one another and not distract from the message. When combined, each should contribute nicely to the common goal or goals inherent to the project. For example, a video production about Steinbeck and writing should contain audio and video which build background knowledge and lead toward writing instruction through effective onscreen prompts and auditory cues. Video producers must work to make sure that these aural prompts and visual cues
are not unclear or distracting and that they blend together well.

Alpha testing the product will allow video producers to ensure that the use of cues is adequate in the educational resource. If prompts and cues are unclear, test subjects will likely complain of a vagueness of thought or direction. Conversely, if prompts and cues are distracting, test subjects will express an annoyance at the incongruity of the distracting content. Either way, valuable information will be conveyed to any video producer who takes the effort to carefully alpha test.

Summary

Students write from the perspective of their own experiences and that fact can be used to the advantage of classroom teachers who have the initiative to create shared experiences for their students. One of the most exciting new forums for doing this is in the realm of video technology. Rather than shying away from a student populace which seems increasingly videocentric and literature poor, teachers can embrace new technology and teach reading and writing with a technological orientation. Sound instructional design strategy should be
followed when producing any educational supplement and educational video is no exception.

Students, as with most people, are drawn to well done visual presentations. Video technology has the capacity to take the viewer on a journey to distant lands and other times and places. The implications for English writing instruction are staggering since all good writing comes from a richness of experience. Kirby and Liner comment about student writing that "If we can draw out the language in their heads, we can help young writers bring shape and refinement to it. If our students are not writing well, it's because we have not yet found a way to tap their inner linguistic resources" (p. ii). These resources can indeed be tapped through the use of videotaped materials. Ask a student to discuss his or her favorite movie and it usually inspires a flow of communication.

Teachers should embrace the reality of technology making inroads to educational content. Teachers must also realize that student learning can occur and effective writing can be inspired through the use of videotaped material and not in spite of it. At that point, education will grow up alongside the society it has created.
CHAPTER THREE
PROJECT DESIGN PROCESSES

Introduction

The project is entitled "John Steinbeck: Inspiration to Write" and subtitled "An Interactive Writing Experience." It incorporates video content taped in the Monterey and Salinas Valley areas of central California; an area known as "Steinbeck Country." The final product is in the form of a DVD accompanied by educational supplements consisting of four learning opportunities for students.

Analysis

This analysis is based upon the English 9 students at Yucaipa High School's Freshman Campus. The information about the learners is derived from conversations and interactions with the staff and students of this particular school site over the last ten years. In effect, focus groups have been conducted concerning the learning styles of Freshman students, in particular. The consensus is that the Freshman year of high school is crucial to determining a student's success level throughout his or her high school academic career. These discussions have
led to an understanding of the characteristics of students in this setting.

The learners are male and female 14-year-old students who have read and discussed John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*. These students may or may not have written a full-length thesis paper on *Of Mice and Men* but, if they have not, they have at least compiled reader response journals for it at this point in the curriculum. Their knowledge of both the Great Depression and John Steinbeck is limited to the aforementioned novel and a short eighth grade history unit on the Depression. The information provided by the educational resource is useful in that the students are to experience additional historical and practical knowledge regarding how Steinbeck gathered, organized, and delivered information to a reading audience.

Students have undoubtedly learned from other videotaped sources in the past but this DVD is intended to be a more interactive resource than most videotaped delivery of instruction because it requires the production of pieces of writing along the way. Prior knowledge required of the learner is an ability to transfer thoughts to paper and to write from different points of view. Some journal writing experience is essential. All of the
students in English 9 have some journal writing experience and all are capable of producing a thesis paper; albeit with varying degrees of success.

A study in the form of a survey (see Appendix B) was conducted to determine the content which would be most effective to use in the teaching of writing on this DVD. Thirty Freshman respondents, both male and female, were asked to answer a series of questions regarding their writing experiences and preferences. Students said that they learned best from visual information such as video images and pictures, followed by hearing other people’s opinions and verbal narration. Students also showed a preference for learning from quotations in stories.

When asked to name a historical event that had occurred in their lifetimes, such as the World Trade Center attack, 21 respondents were able to correctly name one while nine respondents named a personal event instead such as a birthday party. This shows a potential area of growth since not all students were able to identify the difference between historic and personal events. The implication for writing is that students who are more aware of the world outside of their own personal lives will produce more well rounded and informed writings based on broader frames of reference.
Survey results also indicated that, by a 24 to six margin, students showed a preference for physical description as opposed to personality description in terms of inventing their own fictitious characters. Most students cited school journal writing as the most common type of nonfiction writing that they had done; followed up by diary entries. However, many students did have some limited experience with writing nonfiction logs of journeys or memories. Nonfiction writing topics of interest were topped by music and school lunches but students showed apathy toward writing about gossip and fashion. Many students also wrote in topics of interest such as "The War in Iraq", "Movies" and "Reality Television." In all, this analysis of learner characteristics would prove invaluable to the shaping of the educational resource and, in particular, its culminating activities.

The next phase of analysis involved gathering the opinions of English teachers regarding what they would find most practical in terms of an educational resource on DVD. Informal conversations were held with the English Department members at Yucaipa High School's Freshman Campus. Each of the four teachers stated that the resource must tie into the California State Standards for English
Education. Effective modeling of writing types was another suggestion as was the necessity for clear writing prompts and supplemental material to support the resource. Historical background was mentioned, since the project involved an author of historical importance but it did not seem to be as crucial as the other factors in terms of effective English education. However, education across curriculums has been a focus in the Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District for the last five years and is often the subject of staff development training at the school sites.

Currently, California educators in the field of secondary English are being asked to conform to the California Language Arts Content Standards in reference to each and every lesson that is taught within the classroom. The standards focus upon four broad areas in terms of English curriculum: namely "reading, writing, speaking, and listening." Since all lessons taught in the field of English must have these standards as underlying bases of lesson creation, the implication of an educational resource is obviously that the resource must be firmly grounded in the California Language Arts Standards lest it be deemed irrelevant to the education of California English students.
California English students are asked to meet, among other reading and writing standards, Standard 3.0 which states that “Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes” (California Language Arts Content Standards, 2004, #3.0). In simple terms, students must read and write intelligently about material which may not correspond to what their world is all about right now. Any kind of connection that can be built between Depression era 1930’s California, for example, and the world that teenagers live in today is an invaluable resource for meeting English Content Standards.

The following is a list of California English-Language Arts Content Standards which will also be addressed through student interaction with this project:

Reading Comprehension Standard 2.4—Comprehension and Analysis of Grade Level Appropriate Text wherein students will synthesize the content from several sources or works by a single author dealing with a single issue and paraphrase the ideas and connect them to other sources and related topics to demonstrate comprehension. This is done by looking at Steinbeck’s literature in both fictional and
nonfictional accounts which deal with such issues as poverty and the individual vs. society.

Literary Response Standard 3.2-Structural Features of Literature wherein students will compare and contrast the presentation of a similar theme or topic across genres to explain how a selection of genre shapes the theme or topic. Students will see examples and write across genres from observational nonfiction to derivative fictional pieces while maintaining a focus upon similar themes or topics.

Literary Response Standard 3.12-Literary Criticism wherein the students will analyze the way a work of literature is related to the themes and issues of its historical period. This is done by analyzing Steinbeck’s life and work in relation to a timeline of historical events occurring during his lifetime. Subsequently, students will create timelines of their own which contain both personal and historical events beginning with the times of their births.

Writing Strategies Standard 1.1-Organization and Focus wherein the students will establish controlling impressions or coherent thesis statements that convey clear and distinctive perspectives on subjects and maintain consistent tones and focuses throughout the
pieces of writing. Students are to keep journals and produce commentaries about one issue apiece stemming from their journal notes. The commentaries establish the controlling impressions and tones are consistent and focused in the pieces of writing.

Design

Based upon an assessment of learner characteristics and the California State English Language Arts standards, the instructional objectives of the project are as follows:

1. After using the resource, the learners will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of historical timelines on John Steinbeck’s writing, in particular, and on people’s writing in general. This understanding will be demonstrated through class discussion.

2. After using the resource, learners will conduct analyses of information and record findings in an organized fashion, as evidenced by student creation of original timelines.

3. After using the resource, learners will produce experiential writing and will learn to “fictionalize” reality, as evidenced by
nonfiction character description and resultant original reality-based characters.

4. After using the resource, learners will be able to produce original writing pieces which emulate the journalistic log-keeping done by John Steinbeck in his writing career, as evidenced by student journal entries.

5. After using the resource, learners will produce original commentary after the style of John Steinbeck in *Travels with Charley* and *America and Americans* as evidenced by original student observational commentary.

**Instructional Strategy**

One key piece of information which informed the direction of the DVD content was the fact that students had some marginal difficulty in naming historical events which had taken place in their lifetimes. This was crucial in determining how to complete segment one and its inherent culminating activity which was the personal and historical event timeline (see Appendix C).

The point of the Steinbeck Timeline segment in the project is two-fold. First, students are to learn a bit of the history surrounding John Steinbeck as a developing author. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, students
are to develop the concept in their minds that no person exists in a vacuum. In fact, all people exist in the larger context of the historical world around them.

The very context of time itself influenced how segment one would be assembled for the student audience.

The implication for the design of a videotape was as follows. Much as time flows smoothly along, segment one would represent Steinbeck’s life, which extended from 1902 to 1968, in the context of history. Movement would be very fluid and montages would transition in and out representing events in both Steinbeck’s personal/professional life and in the greater historical world around him. One theme throughout the segment would be that events did not interrupt but, rather, shaped Steinbeck as a thinker and as a writer. A script was developed for the end of the segment to lead into the culminating activity (see Appendix D).

To determine how to assemble and culminate segment two which involved the student creation of reality-based characters, students were asked about their preferences regarding descriptions of people. By a slight margin, students preferred sketching physical descriptions over personality descriptions in writing. Scripting was developed to accomplish the purpose of discussing how
Steinbeck would produce his reality based characters (see Appendix D) and the elements relating to this topic, mostly compiled on Cannery Row in Monterey, were assembled. After Steinbeck’s examples were delineated on the video, students were asked to produce some reality based fiction characters of their own. The culminating activity prompted students to list the qualities of an eccentric person he or she had met and to fictionalize that person’s qualities into a new character creation (see Appendix C).

The third segment of the project involved news report styled writing. The Steinbeck footage focused on for this section involved The Great Depression and war coverage done by the author. In addition, some of Steinbeck’s observations regarding the similarities between tide pool marine life and the residents of Cannery Row were noted. Students were then asked to participate in an observational culminating activity in which they spent 10-15 minutes observing and taking notes on activities in an isolated area of the school. Students were asked to choose a perspective from which to write such as a focus on the microscopic world of insects, a “human oriented” observational perspective, or a macroscopic godlike view of the scene from far above the scenario. The standard
elements of journalistic writing are to record what is called the “five W’s and one H” or “who, what, when, where, why, and how.” This is what the culminating activity will ask students to look for and write down (see Appendix C).

Students on the survey revealed a familiarity with the fourth type of writing, observational commentary, mainly because of the practice of writing daily journal entries in English classes. Of the choices provided on the survey, music was chosen as a favorite area of interest to write about, followed by school lunches, gossip, and fashion, in that order. Therefore, it was determined by the numbers of positive and negative responses that, when designing observational writing prompts, music and school lunches appeared to be interesting choices for students but gossip and fashion did not appear to be fruitful at all as writing topics in terms of piquing student interest. They were therefore eliminated as writing prompt suggestions on the final cut of the video and on the culminating activity.

Also, due to the individuality of students, some other categories of probable interest were added to the culminating activity for the segment. These categories were added after informally asking students to think of
topics that they had definite opinions on: Curfew, Homework, Movies, Popularity, The President, Reality Television, and The War in Iraq.

Scripting was developed for segments three and four (see Appendix D) and relevant elements were added from the Steinbeck footage.

One major resource which had to be utilized for this project was The John Steinbeck Center. This museum is an interactive research center in Salinas and is a world class institution for the study of the famous author and the time periods in which he wrote. It features many exhibits about every aspect of Steinbeck’s life and career. The Great Depression and Steinbeck’s reaction to it; both in fiction and nonfiction formats, were focused on heavily in the project and are a focal point of the Steinbeck Center. Lastly, the interview responses of three resident Steinbeck experts in the area, Mr. Neal Hoteling, Mr. David Baumgarten, and Ms. Kalisa Moore were interspersed into the project.

The project is broken into the following categories:

Part One—Timeline: This includes Steinbeck’s personal milestones from birth to death. As these events are examined, the world events of the time period are noted as parallels. The segment ends with a writing
prompt in which students place their own lives in the context of the larger world around them. The culminating activity to part one consists of a timeline containing both historical events and personal events in the students' lives. Learning centers around how writing reflects the greater world around the writer him or herself. (Inspirational Source: "Teaching 20th Century U.S. History through Steinbeck's Eyes," 2001).

Part Two—Reality-based Fiction: This section revolves around the fact that Steinbeck always had based his fiction upon real people and places that he was familiar with. It includes footage mainly set in Monterey's Cannery Row. The writing prompt at the end asks students to write about an eccentric person they know and to subsequently fictionalize that character.

Part Three—Recording Memories and Reporting Reality: This segment moves from Depression era (Grapes of Wrath) to Steinbeck's later nonfiction war commentary. These writing pieces had a strong connection to journal-keeping. As a culminating activity, students are asked to observe in an area of the school and take notes on "who, what, where, when, why, and how" which are standard elements of journalistic writing.
Part Four—Commentary: This final segment concentrates on Steinbeck's tendency to insert both wryly humorous and deadly serious observations about the issues or situations of his day in his nonfiction writings such as *Travels with Charley* and *America and Americans*. Students are asked to make general first person observations about an issue or problem in their world and to offer suggestions for improvement.

**Development**

Footage was shot in three main areas: Salinas, Monterey, and the John Steinbeck Center. Salinas is Steinbeck’s hometown and it provides access to the author’s boyhood home and gravesite. Monterey is a major area of influence for Steinbeck’s writing, particularly concerning the novels *Cannery Row*, *Sweet Thursday*, and *Tortilla Flat*. Ed Ricketts’ lab was also featured because of Steinbeck’s friendship with Ricketts. Ed Ricketts, a marine biologist, inspired the character traits of many protagonists in Steinbeck’s work.

During shooting, an advanced broadcast camera technique called WALLDO was utilized, insuring that all shots recorded for use in the project fell into one of six categories. WALLDO is an acronym for “wide, angled, low, linking, depth, and opposite.” These types of shots are
used constantly by video professionals but sparingly, if at all, by video production novices.

A wide shot is also referred to as an "establishing shot" and it shows an entire setting such as Cannery Row in Monterey. The purpose of the establishing shot is to set the scene for the viewer in terms of time and place. The beginning of each segment of the project contains a wide establishing shot.

An angled shot uses natural lines to convey a linear perspective. For example, a nice angled shot could be achieved by shooting down a boat dock’s hand-railing leading to the ocean beyond it. The project contains a nice angled shot looking down upon a freeway in the last major segment.

Low shots are generally done from the ground perspective or on a tripod set below the average person’s knee height. The result is a bit more dramatic than the typical shoulder height shot since it conveys a largeness of life. The project contains a low shot zooming out along a small stretch of beach. Because of the camera’s ground placement, however, the beach seems much more significant in its composition than it was in reality.

Linking shots are shots which relate directly to one another. A repeated thematic linking shot method used in
the creation of the project was showing the same areas over time, from the 1930's to today.

Depth is the use of foreground and background elements to portray a near three-dimensional image. The advantage of having effective depth shots is the true sense of size and space. For example, a shot of the Grand Canyon by itself would not inspire as much audience reaction as a shot of the Grand Canyon with a person in the foreground to show some perspective on its actual size. The project's ocean shots are studies in the use of depth as seagulls or tidepool rock formations are used as the foreground elements.

Opposite shots are reflections which may come from actual mirrors or mirrored surfaces such as windows in certain light. Since reflections often are distorted, they can be more artistic than the average straight-on shots of objects. One picture of Doc’s lab in the project was done using a reflective and distorted surface.

Interviews were also conducted with some noted Steinbeck experts: Neil Hotelling, a historian, David Baumgarten who bills himself as a “Steinbeck balladeer”, and Kalisa Moore, proprietor of the La Ida Café, who is sometimes referred to as “the queen of Cannery Row.” Moore, interestingly, was the only person available in the
area who had actually met John Steinbeck. Her story, though not exactly in line with one of the four DVD categories, was too compelling and rare to leave out of the final project.

After the footage was shot, a list of desired clips was produced. This list was based on four factors: contribution to the development of Steinbeck as a writer, usefulness as frames of references for students, level of interest and potential for use as writing prompts. Only if a subject fit into one or more of these categories was it included in the final product. Specifically, each piece of footage had to illustrate some facet of writing or prewriting; whether it was to exemplify Steinbeck’s writing or to inspire students to produce their own prose.

After all of the footage was gathered, it was logged by labeling acceptable shots in a notebook and pairing shot description with tape location times. (For example, footage of Steinbeck’s childhood home could be found on 51:21 to 51:30 of videotape B). After the footage was logged, favorable shots were highlighted and categorized as segment one, two, three, or four. These segments correspond to the four divisions of the project itself as delineated in the design section. (See Appendix E).
The project was constructed using a Sony Digital 8 camera, footage shot in Monterey and Salinas, and an iMac computer equipped with iMovie software. The final DVD was burned with iDVD software and divided into six segments: an introduction, segments one through four, and a conclusion.

The clips on the timeline were edited using an iMac G5 computer and iMovie software. The footage was logged (see Appendix E), and then imported, segment by segment into a bin. From the bin, the segments were brought to the timeline and trimmed down with a razor tool to eliminate unnecessary footage. Music used to complete the project was from "The Music Bakery," a buyout music source, and assorted music drops offered under the Fair Use policy. Specifically, the Music Bakery compact disc contains music that blends well with scenery and accompanies rural scenes well. It also lends itself decently to narration. Titles and some audio sound effects were put into place using iMovie's titling system and the computer's capability to record narration.

Very little scripting was developed describing shot selection, narration, transitions, fadeouts, and music use. Instead, detailed shot lists were compiled and
imported to the bin chronologically so that, when brought to the timeline, rearrangement was kept to a minimum.

After footage was delineated, the first task was to lay out the structure and create the project. This was not always done on paper but was done with painstaking trial and error using the iMovie editing program. The result was a DVD done with some intricacy in creation.

For example, in script format, the DVD introduction would be written as follows:

Music Intro
Fade in: Steinbeck as a boy (graphic)
Crossfade to: Steinbeck as a man (graphic)
Fade out.
Fade in to moving titles:
"I nearly always write . . .
just as I nearly always breathe."
Fade out.
"Typed" words appear:
John Steinbeck: Inspiration to Write

This description comprises only about the first ten seconds of the program. To describe the entire project in these terms would involve several hundred pages of writing. After all of the segments were complete, the project was finalized, rendered for effects such as slow
motion and transitions, and saved and burned onto a DVD-R disk through the iDVD program which allowed for menu creation and navigation as well.

Navigational design was not an area which needed to be given much preparation since the project was designed to be used in a linear fashion. However, the teacher may choose to skip segments at his or her discretion fairly easily since the DVD is segmented according to all four categories as well as the introduction and conclusion. Specifically, the segments are labeled "Introduction, Timeline, Reality-based Fiction, Recording and Reporting, Observational Commentary, and Conclusion." The culminating activity handouts are be provided to teachers along with the resource. These will aid with the instruction and implementation of the activities. Since solid design principles were met, teachers should have no problem using the resource without lengthy rites of familiarization to it.

The philosophical structure followed to create the project is delineated below, segment-by-segment.

When segment one commences, it will focus on the following standards:
Standard 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science.

Substandard 3.12 Literary Criticism

Analyze the way in which a work of literature is related to the themes and issues of its historical period.

As delineated, the initial segment involves the analysis of Steinbeck’s life through the lens of a Steinbeck timeline and the subsequent creation of student timelines. Refer to Appendix E for a shot list regarding the clips used for segment one.

The second segment parallels fiction and reality and illustrates how Steinbeck blurred the line between the two in novels such as *Cannery Row*.

Segment two is designed to address the following standards:

Standard 2.0 Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level appropriate material.

Substandard 2.4 Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level Appropriate Text

Synthesize the Content from several sources of works by a single author dealing with a single issue.
Standard 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science.

Substandard 3.2 Structural Features of Literature

Compare and contrast the presentation of a similar topic theme or topic across genres to explain how the selection of genre shapes the theme or topic.

Segment two ends with students listing nonfiction character traits and then transitioning them into original fiction character traits.

Refer to Appendix E for a shot list of the clips used in segment two.

Section three involves the accurate recording of information as it is observed.

The following standards are relevant to part three:

Standard 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science.

Substandard 3.2 Structural Features of Literature

Compare and contrast the presentation of a similar topic theme or topic across genres to explain how the selection of genre shapes the theme or topic.
This segment concentrates on Steinbeck’s log-keeping and transitions to an assignment involving student versions of event oriented journals. Refer to Appendix E for a shot list of the clips used in segment three.

The last section focuses on Steinbeck’s observational writings toward the end of his career.

It addresses these standards:
Standard 1.0 Writing strategies
Students write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument.
Substandard 1.1 Organization and Focus
Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

The whole project culminates in the classroom production of student observational essays. Refer to Appendix E for a shot list of clips used in this last segment.

The National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California has granted permission to videotape all museum exhibits save videotaped materials belonging to film production companies (see Appendix F). The Music Bakery has also
granted permission for the use of the background music heard on the project (see Appendix F). In addition, the provisions of the fair use policy for education allow for all sounds and images used in conjunction with this project to be utilized for limited nonprofit use. The fair use policy states that published material including images, music drops, factual material, quotations, and other references may be used for limited nonprofit educational purposes. This project, designed for the use of a limited audience at Yucaipa High School, is protected under Fair Use.

**Alpha and Beta Testing**

Alpha testing was the first step. The product was aligned to the California State Standards for teaching writing at the Freshman level. It was presented to subject matter experts who tested it against the standards. The testers consisted of four content area teachers who were to rate the resource. They were to answer the questions on an evaluation form (see Appendix B) and to provide some feedback to direct the development of the DVD. The writing prompts would also be evaluated.

Analysis of the success or failure of these objectives was done by presenting the project, in finalized DVD format, to the four content area teachers in
four distinct stages. These teachers role-played students and acted as subject matter experts. After each stage, an assessment or practical writing segment was conducted. These assessments or writing opportunities tested teachers' ability and, by extension, potential student ability to apply the knowledge that the DVD had provided. If teachers felt that students would be successful in producing what was required of them, according to survey results, (see Appendix B) and were successful themselves in completing the writing activities, then the educational resource was considered a success.

Once the DVD was produced, the English teachers interacted with the teaching aid and supplemental materials to determine whether the product taught effective writing technique and modeled Steinbeck's style of writing effectively. All instructions and writing prompts were examined and critique for educational effectiveness.

The following changes were implemented due to Alpha testing.

The first Alpha test respondents came to the conclusion that the writing prompts were primarily verbal with short and vague titles. Without supplemental handouts, it was thought that students may miss some
procedural details. At first, no model was shown as a demonstration for what had to be done. As a result, short demonstration modeling segments were shot using either the actual handouts or instructions based on the handouts. These were added to the writing prompt segments. Scripts were written for each of these culminating activity segments (see Appendix D). Steinbeck's modeling of writing, visual stimuli, and writing prompts all received substantially decent ratings. In addition, all four teachers were able to complete the pieces of writing successfully as if they were student participants.

The second Alpha test results were a more aesthetic critique. It was determined that the default setting for rolling credits was too fast to read the standards as they scrolled onscreen. That had to be adjusted. Also, some events on the timeline were placed inadvertently out of order. This was noticeable since they were labeled by date. These had to be placed in chronological order and music adjustments had to be made for effective pacing.

In addition, the Music Bakery music turned out to be effective in small doses but monotonous over time. Therefore, music drops were utilized in combination with Music Bakery buyout music to provide a better overall musical score.
One Beta test finding was that the narration recording capability on the iMac was found to be unsatisfactory. When the input volume was turned down, narration was too quiet and, when it was turned up, narration was too hollow. Additionally, the computer's internal noises were being picked up as were distant background and room noises. A third party company's unidirectional microphone attached to the iMac's microphone input jack fared even worse as it was incompatible with the computer despite being marketed as being compatible with the iMac. The solution was to record all narration to the Sony Digital 8 video camcorder, import the clips of narration, separate the audio, delete the video, and drag the audio segments to their desired locations on the timeline. The result was crisp and clear narration.

A second Beta test finding was the disturbing fact that what was showing up on the computer monitor turned out to be only a portion of what showed up on the television monitor and, thus, the final copy of the project. Since there was an extra half-inch of footage showing up on the left side, test exports had to be done quite frequently and footage had to be eliminated if extraneous shot elements showed up. Even though the aspect
ratio was set to align with standard televisions at 640 x 480, there was still a very slight variance around the left edges. This fact rendered many shots less effective or even unusable in the final project. A separate tape had to be used and labeled "test exports" and many segments had to be recut at least once due to elements on the monitor which were undetectable when shot or reviewed on the video camera's view-screen.

Beta testing or quality assurance also consisted of using the product with multiple DVD players and trying to play the video straight through and in segments. Sampling was done on three different DVD manufacturers' products: a 1999 RCA DVD player, a 2003 Panasonic DVD Recorder, and a 2003 Sony DVD player. The 1999 RCA DVD player was the only one that exhibited any difficulty, specifically in that it took an extra 10 to 20 seconds to register the presence of the disc.

Navigation was tested by providing the resource to teachers with no written or verbal instructions. The response was then recorded with special emphasis placed on what did not work effectively. No teachers had difficulty with the DVD in terms of its operation or navigation.

The disc was also tested in two computers with DVD drives, the 2003 Apple iMac it was created on, and a 2000
Sony Vaio laptop personal computer. Even though the project was not intended to be used on a personal computer, it played with no difficulty.

Implementation

Prerequisites prior to the use of this project in the classroom should include an exposure to journal writing, an introduction to Steinbeck as an author, and prior coverage of at least one Steinbeck novel. Though not explicitly mandated in the project’s instructions, it is highly recommended that English teachers who use this resource promote the normal follow-through of the writing process with these culminating activities for best results. The writing process is normally utilized in the production of writing projects on the high school campus.

However, if teachers should wish to utilize the project as a series of warm-up activities, that is also a decent use of the resource. As such, no instructions are provided that could be considered rigid implementation rules. In fact, such mandates may actually discourage teachers from viewing the resource as a potential asset to their individual classroom materials.

Implementation in the classroom will ultimately consist of utilizing the educational resource in
conjunction with the set of activity prompt handouts. From there, the writing segments should naturally flow into the writing process from rough draft production to peer editing, revision, and final copy completion. Please refer to Appendix C for the culminating activity sheets.

The project is designed in order to be simple to implement without a preponderance of material for teachers to be accountable for learning. A high learning curve is not something desirable for any new educational resource. Teachers work hard enough without having to subject themselves to the acquaintance of a difficult to use resource. It is much easier to find something more user-friendly. Knowing this, it is very positive to report that the resource can be easily usable even without written support. However, the culminating activities and general instructions do prove helpful.

This four segment unit is intended to be implemented after the coverage of Of Mice and Men in Freshman English or after the coverage of Cannery Row in Sophomore English. Because it is a unique style of learning and a unique presentation, it will be remembered from year to year. Thus, it is important to decide, as an English department, which grade it would more beneficially serve. At present, the Freshman campus is the only campus slated to receive
the resource but, in the future, the Freshman campus has plans to merge with the high school. This could open up a whole new audience for the project and, since this is a possibility, English standards for both Freshmen and Sophomores have been utilized for a possible multileveled implementation scheme.

Evaluation

The process was difficult organizationally because of so much information which had to be documented on the raw footage tapes. In all, ten hours worth of footage was shot. Another difficulty was the fact that the strict categories of lesson structure could not be compromised so some effective but irrelevant footage had to be sacrificed. In other words, there was no room for sentimentality.

Overall, the project should prove useful to inspire Freshman students to write utilizing the varied styles that John Steinbeck used in his writing. In the long run, some of the other footage could be used to create a historical video for Steinbeck scholars but, for the purposes of English instruction, this project will serve as a valuable resource at Yucaipa High School for years to come.
Summary

Without sound instructional design, effort could well go wasted on a Masters project and, on a smaller scale, on a lesson plan in general. Each lesson must be developed with a standard for learning as its impetus. Likewise, each educational resource must be produced with standards, or educational ends, in mind.

The ADDIE model was an effective one to follow in producing the Steinbeck DVD project. Analysis of learners and context, learner needs, and instructional analysis, especially regarding learning from video-based materials, was helpful to delineate which areas of instruction could best be facilitated in Yucaipa High School’s English 9 classroom. From there, performance objectives were produced. Assessment needed to be developed in full next as would direct instructional strategy.

Unlike most direct to audience educational video, this project was designed to be more interactive. This meant some direct instruction had to be a part of the DVD content. Specifically, the DVD prompts the teacher to move to culminating activities at the end of each of the four segments.

After many a year and four trips to Monterey, the remaining tasks involved putting the structure together
and physically assembling clips, titles, music, and transitions into the final project. For better or worse, it would prove to be a result which took on a life of its own. Considering the way that John Steinbeck used to produce his novels, it is conceivable that the famous author himself would have had it no other way.
CHAPTER FOUR
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The National Steinbeck Center was created as a means for collaboration with schools throughout the state of California. Cannery Row is likewise a living tribute to John Steinbeck and the wonderful characters he created. One interesting benefit of this project is that students in Southern California, who may not have the resources to travel to what is deemed “Steinbeck Country”, can still benefit from being exposed to some of this content on DVD. More importantly, student writing is being encouraged, promoted, and celebrated in the culminating activities to each segment of the project. Far from being an inaccessible writer, Steinbeck’s styles of writing can be used as models for the effective production of student writing. That is what this project purports to do.

In summary, this project began with a simple idea which came from a quotation about Steinbeck and that was this: “John Steinbeck was the only man who could take a grain of sand and make a whole beach of it.” It has taken hours and hours and days and days but this project has
finally grown from that proverbial grain of sand into a monstrously complicated video production experience.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from the project are as follows:

1. Structure is of the utmost importance in producing video production projects. It is important to establish the direction of the video before footage is gathered.

2. In the actual gathering of raw footage, the concept of WALLDO should be employed. All shots should have some element of these advanced broadcast camera techniques—wide shots, angled shots, low shots, linking shots, depth shots, or opposite shots (reflections).

3. When adding music or titles, the maintenance of flow should not be compromised with jolting or flashy songs or graphics.

4. The video producer's job is to capture the essence of a subject, whether it is an author's career or a shot of Cannery Row at dawn.

5. Expect equipment difficulty and be innovative in finding its solution as evidenced by the
narration difficulty and lack of accurate computer-to-monitor transition adjustments.

Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the project are as follows:

Anyone doing a project involving the shooting of video would be well advised to follow the tenets of WALLDO to ensure that footage is suitable for a final product. The old adage “garbage in, garbage out” is applicable in this case. It is also crucial to do test export tapes and review all footage on an NTSC television monitor before the fine tuning type of editing is done such as the adding of transitions, titles, and music or narration. If that stage is skipped, it will be very difficult to make up for lost time due to unusable footage.

Thematic planning and shot logging is a must as is a sense for how music matches footage to create a message. Those aesthetic qualities arrive over time spent perfecting the art of effective video production.

It is recommended that this project be used with a small number of students at first and that adjustments be made in the culminating activities if problems arise. Also, although this project can be implemented as is, it
is important that teachers consider modeling their own writing in response to the prompts. This would further student understanding. For example, a teacher born in 1967 may provide more current examples of a timeline's historic events such as the bicentennial celebrations in 1976 or the "Miracle on Ice" in 1980 as examples to show students who are having trouble creating timelines of their own.

Students who are visual learners may also benefit from drawing a picture of a character prior to writing a description for the reality based fiction segment. Such an exercise may stimulate students to describe a character's traits much more fully than he or she would have been able to otherwise.

For the news reporting segment, it is recommended that students be encouraged to remain silent while observing so that they don't miss details they would otherwise miss when having a conversation. Finally, for the last segment, students should be encouraged to take an active interest in all sorts of happenings in and around the country and the world and to have unabashedly strong opinions to put forth in writing. Furthermore, this opinionated writing should be read aloud so that it may have an audience to interact with it, for better or for
worse. It is only then that writing takes on a life of its own.

Many Freshman students do not often tend to value the past as much as they do the present or the future. Knowing that this quality of our learners exists, the product incorporates contemporary writing prompts along with Steinbeck’s examples in an attempt to draw students into the writing exercises required of them. Freshman students are cognitively capable of producing writing which, after a few revisions, can be devoid of error. However, the full writing process must be followed in order to produce these favorable results. The culminating activities, therefore, will require commitment to the writing process with full follow-through for best results. This involves Brainstorming, Rough Draft production, Peer Editing, Revision, and Final Draft Production. The writing process, though not mentioned on the DVD, is a standard practice followed in virtually all California secondary English classrooms.

The time to use this resource is largely unlimited but a wise time period would be one class period for each of the four segments on the DVD and time at home to complete the other steps of the writing process. Faster
progress through the project would likely be detrimental to the writing process and could overwhelm the students.

Summary

This four segment project has been an extensive and worthwhile endeavor. It has yet to be fully tested and implemented in a classroom setting but it definitely has potential as a solid educational resource for California secondary English students. In embracing both the Standards for the Teaching of English and the spirit of incorporating technology in the classroom, it will hopefully be seen as quite an asset to the English program at Yucaipa High School. The project successfully melds video production technique with writing technique to produce a new conceptual animal: writing style on video.

If one were asked to draw a picture of a writing style, one would be hard pressed to do it. How much more has been accomplished, then, if an entire video project has been done to represent this very subject? Despite its conceptual difficulty, it would be tough to find a more important subject to feature for this work. Writing and the reading of writing are fundamental human qualities; indeed human privileges without which the world would not
be nearly as rich. As John Steinbeck is quoted as saying in the beginning of the project:

"I nearly always write...

just as I nearly always breathe."
APPENDIX A

DVD OF PROJECT
APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS TOOLS: STUDENT AND TEACHER SURVEY
Student Interest in Writing Topics: Survey of Freshmen

1. Please circle all answers which apply to the question.

I learn well from:

a. hearing other people's opinions.
b. quotations in stories.
c. verbal information (conveyed by narration).
d. visual information (video images and pictures).

2. Please name two historical events which have occurred in your lifetime.

a. ________________________________________________
b. ________________________________________________

3. Please choose one response to the following question.

What do you find easier to describe in writing when creating fictional characters?

a. Physical description of the characters
b. Personality description of the characters

4. Please circle all answers which apply to the question.

What sorts of nonfiction writing have you done in the past?

a. Diary entries
b. School journal entries
c. Logs of journeys or memories
d. Other ________________________________

d. Other ________________________________

d. Other ________________________________

5. On a scale of 1-5, please rank these writing topics in order of your interest in them. (1= "most interested" to 5= "least interested").

____ dress code  ______ school lunches
____ gossip  ______ music
Evaluation of Educational Resource: Interview of Freshman Teachers

1. On a scale of 1-10, please rate the effectiveness of each of these aspects of the educational resource in terms of the overall education of students.
   
a. Steinbeck background information  
b. Steinbeck's modeling of writing  
c. Visual stimuli  
d. Writing prompts  

2. Which section of the educational resource needs improvement and how so?

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Which section of the educational resource is most applicable to the English curriculum you currently teach?

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Please supply any additional comments you can offer regarding this educational resource.

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES
Name __________________

Personal Events In My Lifetime

[Boxes with Xs]

Historical Events In My Lifetime

[Boxes with Xs]
Instructions for Segment One:

"We Live In History" timeline exercise

We all live in history. This exercise is designed to illustrate that fact.

The timeline will begin on the day of your birth. The first rectangle under “Personal Events” should be labeled as your birthdate. Then you will label seven more events in your personal history in chronological order (such as the births of siblings, dates of personal achievements, etc.) You may want to consult with your family or friends to help you remember significant events to include.

For the “Historical Events” section, use the internet to research some important world events which have occurred in your lifetime. For example, the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 would be something not to be overlooked in recent history. Fill in these events in chronological order just as you did for the “Personal Events” section.
Culminating Activity—Segment Two: Reality-Based Fiction

Think of the most eccentric person you know. Make that image strong in your mind.

Step One: Draw a picture of this person in the space below. Stick figure drawings are acceptable but try to include as much detail as you can.

Step Two: On a separate sheet of paper, describe that person physically from head to toe in one paragraph.

Step Three: On the same sheet of paper, describe that person’s mannerisms and personality traits. Include a quotation; something that person has said or would say.

Step Four: Revise the description, change the name of the real person ever so slightly (or make one up), and add three to five interesting details from your own imagination.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE JUST FICTIONALIZED A CHARACTER!
Culminating Activity-Segment Three:
Recording Memories and Reporting Reality

We are going on a small trip to a location on the school site. Your task is to record information on as many "news report oriented" details as you can, focusing on the five W's and one H. In the future, you may use this method to record important memories.

Who

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

What

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

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When

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Where

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________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Why

________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

How

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Culminating Activity-Segment Four:

Observational Commentary

One of the traits that separates human beings from animals is our ability to observe, analyze, and form opinions on the world around us. When those opinions are voiced or printed, they are called “commentary”. This commentary, when recorded in writing can live on past our deaths and provide us with a sort of immortality. John Steinbeck has been gone from the world since 1968 but his voice lives on in writing.

Your task is to form some basic opinions about a topic of your choice and organize your thoughts into writing. Here are some topics you may choose to create commentary about.

- School Lunches
- Music
- Movies
- Reality Television
- The War in Iraq
- The President
- Popularity
- Curfew
- Homework

Or choose a topic of your choice . . .

On a separate sheet of paper, write about one of these or another issue that you have an opinion about. Be specific on whether this is a positive or negative response. You may provide examples but make sure you stay on topic and that your opinions come through loudly and strongly.
APPENDIX D

SCRIPTED NARRATION-SEGMENTS
John Steinbeck lived from 1902 to 1968 (gravestone). During that time period, many historical events shaped the way he thought. Events such as the Great Depression in the 1930’s (pic), Kennedy’s assassination (pic), and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s (pic) colored the way Steinbeck thought and the writing he did reflected those thoughts.

Whether we realize it or not, our writing is also influenced by historical events and, after it is set down on paper, it becomes a snapshot of the past. (Show a hand writing and, at the word “snapshot”, freeze frame and change effect to black and white or old time movie). For instance, we now live in a time which is very patriotic in our nation’s history. A lot of our writing now is devoted to the love we have for our country. This, in many ways is an unexpected positive side effect from the World Trade Center attacks on September 11th, 2001 (Flag closeup/fades to fireman flag pic).
Scripted Narration-Segment One:

Timeline (continued)

Steinbeck relied heavily on research and personal observation to do his writing. Therefore, he often thrust himself into the midst of historical events as they unfolded (pic). More than ever, through television, we are also thrust into the midst of historical events (9-11 towers image). How did we feel on the tragic day of September 11th, 2001? How have those feelings affected the way we see the world and write about it?

We all do live in historical times and, at the same time, lead personal lives (titles). For example, the election of a new President (Bush pic) is a historic event, while the birth of a baby brother (pic) or sister (pic) is a personal event.

Create a timeline (show handout) beginning with your birthdate and ending today. On this timeline, place personal events in your life along the top. Next, research on the internet to find historic events to fill the bottom portion.

Stop the program here to complete this activity and discuss your results.
Scripted Narration-Segment Two:

Reality-Based Fiction

(Music/Cannery Row a.m. shots) "Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a poem, a stink, a grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream." John Steinbeck's novel Cannery Row was set right here in Monterey, California. The characters were sometimes based on friends of his such as Ed Ricketts, a marine biologist known in the book as "Doc" (pic). He also liked to write about homeless but happy people, vagrants and bums, and make them the heroes of his fiction (wax figure/pics).

He would not stop there, however. It has been said of Steinbeck that "he is the only person who can take a grain of sand and make a whole beach of it." His method was to take an ordinary person and exaggerate his characteristics to create an extraordinary character.

(Vignettes and interviews regarding Steinbeck's methods of character creation)

(Venice beach shots) Today, in California, we have no shortage of interesting and eccentric people. Who is the most eccentric person you have ever met? Make that image strong in your mind.

Stop the program here to complete the activity and discuss your results.
Scripted Narration-Segment Three:

Recording Memories and Reporting Reality

Like many authors, John Steinbeck was a reporter as well; an expert at expressing in print the reality of the world around him. One of his passions was standing up for the underdog, the poor, the taken-advantage of, the unfortunate (pics). The way he did this was by recording memories and reporting reality according to what is called in journalism the five W's and one H.


For example, in this location on Cannery Row by the ocean a writer may report the following details. (Ocean scenes with titles to describe the elements. Use opaque bar for titling).

Stop the program here to complete this activity and discuss your results.
Scripted Narration-Segment Four:

Observational Commentary

In Travels with Charley and America and Americans, John Steinbeck presents his own personal opinions on the important and the not so important topics of his day.

The plan for Travels with Charley was an interesting one. Steinbeck would buy a truck with a camper shell on it and set off with his poodle Charley on a trip from New York to California. In Steinbeck's words, this was a trip “in search of America.”

Here are some of his observations along the way.

(Quotes and video from Travels).

Two years before Steinbeck's death, he published a book entitled America and Americans. This book was Steinbeck's last chance to comment on the country and the world he was about to leave. Many of these comments are relevant today. (Quotes and video from America).

One of the traits that separates human beings from animals is our ability to observe, to analyze, and to form opinions about the world around us. The commentary created from these opinions, when recorded in writing, can live on past our deaths and provide us with a sort of immortality. Steinbeck has been gone from the world since 1968 but his voice lives on in writing.

Stop the program here to complete the activity and discuss your results.
APPENDIX E

LOGS OF RAW FOOTAGE BY SEGMENT
Segment One-Timeline

42:25-Born (narration) B
1:22  Steinbeck Home B
52:27, 54:14-Steinbeck home B
1:29 quote re: home B
3:55 John's room B
51:21-51:30 pullback from John's room now B

4:17 Narration re: Salinas B
4:49-4:53 run in reverse and freeze on 4:49 Salinas B
50:06-50:19 fade into modern day Salinas street B
42:40,42:47-John/Mary B
43:06,43:14-High school/Spreckels B
43:29, 43:34-Narrate B
12:03-12:19 Depression pic pullback B
1:36, 1:43, 1:49, Carol Henning (1\textsuperscript{st} wife) 1930 B
43:40, 43:48-Carol B
44:16-Young JS B
44:23-Grapes B
1:52, 2:08 Gwyn Conger (2\textsuperscript{nd} wife) 1943 B
2:37,2:50,3:12 Steinbeck's sons Thom 1944, John Jr. 1946 B
32:25 w/sons B
22:17, 22:26 RR Xing Ed's death B

41:35-RR Xing C

2:16, 2:24, 2:32 Elaine Scott (3\textsuperscript{rd} wife) 1951 B
45:16, 45:27, 45:38, 45:45 Elaine Scott B
Footnote: At the time of Steinbeck’s death, he had produced 32 novels and memoirs and numerous short writings which have contributed greatly to the advancement of American literature.
Segment Two-Reality-Based Fiction

20:06-20:09 Cannery B
20:35, 22:49-Cannery Row Quote B(fade to images)
46:56,47:04,48:03-Light Quality C
55:42-55-46-A Stink C
50:36-Sardines C
57:45-Can Row C
50:50-Water C
51:16-Sun over water C
56:02-Seagull sunup C
20:38,20:45-Fish B
13:45-Seagull C
59:34 Sardine B
20:58-Cannery Workers B
002:17-008:00,010:20,034:20-Cannery Row C
(narration-Steinbeck's focus was not on the workers in Cannery Row but rather on the nonworkers . . . )
20:37-21:02-Reality based fiction D
25:45-26:10 Reality based fiction D cont'd
Kai 42:54-42:59 Dialogue
22:52, 23:00-Narration B
41:01-Cannery Row sign C
23:20 fade to 23:12 fade to 23:08 Cannery B
23:35 Cannery Row B(fade to Cannery Row now)
9:58,10:06-Can Row comparison C
23:49-The Row B
14:42-15:12, 16:00-16:18-Fiction based on people/Doc D

_Steinbeck the liar_

22:12-Doc’s lab B (fade into shot of lab now)

56:42, 56:50-Doc’s lab C (now)

41:55-42:04-Ed’s statue C

28:00-28:05-Ed D

30:21-30:34-Ed’s job

1:31-1:50-Ocean: Use with narration D

2:31-2:38 Ocean D

3:54-4:06-Pacific Grove D

12:24-12:45-Tidepool waves roll in D

13:38-tidepool creature D

5:47, 7:07-7:21, 7:45-8:13, 9:25 Tidepool D

9:34-9:45, 10:30-10:35, 10:50-10:55 Tidepool D

28:37-29:00, 29:15-30:00-Tidepool narration

31:11-32:03-Tidepool narration (match w/ wax bum)

24:48, 24:49, 24:54 Boiler pipe B (cut to real boiler pipe)

56:59-Boiler pipe B

3:43-Boiler Man C

59:17-59:26 Transformation of Cannery Row B

50:17, 50:26-Kalis’s/La Ida C

Kal 7:46-10:07 meeting J. S.

Kal 5:23-5:46 observational style

Kal 24:40-25:09 exploitation

59:21 Steinbeck Sunbeam C

(narration: one thing is for sure: despite the commercialism and the tourist industry’s best efforts to transform Cannery Row into a shopping
mall, early in the morning, about 5 am, some of the magic that Steinbeck wrote about still remains.)

A.M. Video W/music
53:00-53:23-Waves crash am C
54:01-Seagulls am C
54:24-54:30-sunup C
56:20-56:25-sunup bird C
57:50-58:00-sunrise of the seagulls C
58:05-freezeframe C
58:49-Sunbeam C

57:46-58:07-narration re: magnet of Can Row D

40:33-41:10,41:18-41:20 Conclusion

Do developed conclusion as written, test export, revise, export on two tapes. Reimport and move to next segment.
Segment Three-Recording Memories and Reporting Reality
10:18, 10:22, 10:32, 10:41-OMAM B
13:26, 13:39, 13:52, 14:01, 14:08-Depression B
49:03, 49:08-OMAM B


Kal 43:44-44:12 OMAM

14:15, 14:21, 14:28, 14:32 fade to 14:40-Oakie child B
14:47-Dried up farm B

24:28-25:08-Depression D

15:45, 15:53, 16:02, 16:17-Oakie logs (living history) B
16:54, 17:01-17:05, 17:29-Oakies B
17:42, 17:54, 18:09, 18:15-Oakies B
18:24, 18:38, 18:59, 19:41-Narration/reaction/Depression B

26:05, 26:20-Tide pools quotes B

Neal 14:22-14:43, 14:54-16:10-Tide pools (break up)

Neal 20:58-21:12 human worth

28:00, 28:07-War quotes B
29:00-29:10, 29:34, 29:41 Nazi flag B (w/narration “thrust himself into history”)
30:12-30:29-Narration war B
30:44, 30:49-War B
31:45-passport B


14:35-14:40, 15:49-15:59-Ocean zooms C
23:10-23:13-Ocean image C
24:40-24:53-Otter C
26:06-26:08-Scenery C
27:19-Seagull C
30:32-30:37-Old fisherman C
22:16-22:22-Images to write about/Boat C
32:37-32:46-Ocean flowers C
34:32-34:44-Boat goes out C

(Do sample writing over images and go to writing prompt).

Do developed conclusion as written, test export, revise, export on two tapes. Reimport and move to next segment.
Segment Four-Observational Commentary
30:56-Steinbeck smoking (introspective) B
34:09, 34:24, 34:28, 34:43-Travels w/ Charley B
34:50-Freeway Quote B (mix w/freeway footage)
34:55-cities quote B
35:04-restaurant quote B
35:31-narration B
35:37-Towns and villages B
35:47-poster B
35:54-Good observational quote Travels B
36:20-narration B (show Charley)
36:35,36:43-pix B
36:48-conclusion quote B
37:02, 37:08-trips observation B
37:18-quote Rocinante B
38:19-38:27, 41:39-41:32 inside Rocinante (pick one) B

Do developed conclusion as written, test export, revise, export on two tapes. Reimport and move to next segment.

Credits
46:27, 48: 25-Quote/Steinbeck Center B
59:21 Steinbeck Sunbeam C

Do final test export, revision, and final export to save.

Burn to DVD and create chapter segments.
APPENDIX F

CLEARANCE FORMS
April 22, 2005

Mr. Jeffrey C. Pitcher  
C/O Prof. Brian Newberry  
Department of ETEC  
California State University San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Mr. Pitcher:

Your application to use human subjects, titled “Steinbeck Writing Patterns DVD” has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). All subsequent copies used must be this officially approved version. A change in your informed consent requires resubmission of your protocol as amended.

You are required to notify the IRB if any substantive changes are made in your research prospectus/protocol, if any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and when your project has ended. If your project lasts longer than one year, you (the investigator/researcher) are required to notify the IRB by email or correspondence of Notice of Project Ending or Request for Continuation at the end of each year. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Carmen Jones, (Interim) IRB Secretary. Mrs. Jones can be reached by phone at (909) 880-5027, by fax at (909) 880-7028, or by email at ccjones@csusb.edu. Please include your application identification number (above) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research

Sincerely,

Joseph Lovett, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

JL/ccj

Cc: Prof. Pitcher – Department of ETEC
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Yucaipa Calimesa Jr. Unified School District - 9th grader

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REFERENCES


