

Project 2

Discussion Program

Undertaking the discussion program that follows will offer a number of challenges for the students. The spontaneous nature of such a program calls for a technique of camera control that must adjust to the changing flow of the conversation pattern. The director must learn to block out and utilize several alternative plans for camera coverage. The exercise also provides an opportunity for the director and crew to gain experience in working under the pressures of finite rehearsal and production time limitations—as well as the constraints of the running time of the program itself. A five- or six-minute program length within an overall production time period of 30 minutes is suggested, with the first production of each class period being given an additional 20 minutes for initial lighting and studio setup.

This exercise is best accomplished as a round robin, with everyone having a turn as director and also a turn at every other position. You can make up a rotation sheet based on the number of students you have in the class and the equipment you have. If the class is large, you may have to have some students simply observe some of the time.

During the 30-minute time period, each director in turn must make sure that the crew members are in their proper positions, minor lighting adjustments are made to accommodate talent changes, camera blocking is set up, audio levels are checked, the opening and closing segments are rehearsed, and the show itself is taped. It often helps if a final “must roll” time for taping the production is established.

The A.D. should be assigned the task of back-timing the program and feeding cues (through the floor manager) to the program host. These cues should be expressed in terms of time remaining (“two minutes,” “one minute,” “30 seconds,” and “10 seconds”) to the beginning of the closing segment. The precise time of this summary segment (approximately one minute) can be determined by the A.D. during the rehearsal period. Its length is the key in getting the show off on time.

Each panel (as determined by the rotation sheet) can select its own discussion topic in conjunction with the director. It is important that there be at least two opposing sides to any issue under discussion in order to produce a lively exchange of views. As a way of facilitating this confrontational discourse, have students assume role-playing situations (defending positions that may not necessarily be their own).

An optimum use of time can be achieved if the instructor and the student director view and critique the just-completed recording of the director’s program while the next director and crew are setting up for the next production (perhaps under the supervision of your teaching assistant). If facilities are available, the benefits of this critique can be enhanced by having the production intercom recorded on the second audio track of the recording. Quite often, any difficulty can be traced back to what was said or not said by the director at a crucial point in the production.

During the initial setup period of the production class, the stage manager and host and guests can work with the audio operator to set up and check out the microphones. At the same time, the grip and camera operators can work with the lighting director as the initial lighting crew to set up the basic lighting pattern for the day's programs.

Students should be reminded that the so-called talk show program has been, and will continue to be, an enduring format for all types of program situations. With the addition of some preproduced packages, it becomes the magazine format, which is the backbone of much cable and commercial television.

Class Discussion Program Script

Opening and Closing Format

VIDEO AUDIO

WIDE

ESTAB.

SHOT MUSIC: ESTABLISH 5 SECONDS AND UNDER

CAM 2

CG: TITLE

KEYED

OVER

CAM 2 ANNC: "FRAME OF REFERENCE," AN INFORMATION SERVICE PROGRAM

DESIGNED TO EXPLORE THE MULTIFACETED ISSUES THAT AFFECT US, BOTH AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS MEMBERS OF AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX SOCIETY. HERE WITH OUR GUESTS IS THE "FRAME OF REFERENCE"

MODERATOR,_____.

MUSIC: OUT

MCU, CAM1 MODERATOR: OUR AREA OF EXAMINATION TODAY IS _____

_____. TO HELP US IN GAINING A GREATER

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THIS ISSUE ARE
THREE PEOPLE WHO HOLD SOMEWHAT DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE SOLUTIONS
TO THOSE PROBLEMS. SEATED NEXT

CU CAM 3 TO ME IS _____ FROM _____.

CU CAM 2 OUR SECOND GUEST IS _____ WHO
REPRESENTS _____.

CAM 3 OUR FINAL GUEST, WHO IS FROM _____, IS
_____.

WIDE SHOT AS A WAY OF ESTABLISHING THE BACKGROUND TO TODAY'S ISSUE, I WOULD
LIKE TO ADDRESS MY FIRST QUESTION TO _____.

(BODY OF PROGRAM TO CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION)

CU MOD-

ERATOR

CAM 1 MODERATOR: WITH THAT LAST POINT WE MUST, FOR NOW CONCLUDE OUR
DISCUSSION OF _____. THE ISSUE IS A LARGE ONE AND
OUR PROGRAM TIME IS, UNFORTUNATELY, LIMITED. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK
OUR GUESTS _____, _____, AND
_____ FOR JOINING US TODAY AND FOR MEASURABLY
ADDING TO OUR COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE. THIS
IS _____. GOOD-BYE UNTIL NEXT WEEK.

MUSIC: ESTABLISH 5 SECONDS AND UNDER

EXTREME

WIDE SHOT

CAM 2

KEY

CREDITS ANNC: AS A PROGRAM, "FRAME OF REFERENCE" DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH ANY FINAL SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS UNDER DISCUSSION. OUR GOAL IS THAT OF PRESENTING WELL-INFORMED OPINION LEADERS TO OUR VIEWING PUBLIC SO THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL CAN COME TO HIS OR HER OWN CONCLUSIONS. NEXT WEEK OUR "FRAME OF REFERENCE" WILL ENCOMPASS THE MATTER OF _____ . BE SURE TO JOIN US THEN.

FADE TO MUSIC: Fade Out

BLACK
