

MODULE: 4c) TV/video Production in Distance Education
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This section complements in the previous Module section, by discussing procedures for the production of complex TV/video materials in distance education (DE). It gives examples of the production process used at the Universitas Terbuka (UT), Indonesia.

Broadcast TV and non-broadcast video are powerful teaching media. They can handle complex topics that may be impossible to communicate in other ways, and can teach students who may be hard to reach by other means. They can also provide concrete illustrations of abstract ideas. Today, TV/video programmes can be presented not only through broadcasting stations, but also online with video streaming. This versatility makes TV and video formats a highly effective medium for delivering DE learning materials.

Production formats

A wide range of production formats can be used in educational TV/video, usually falling into one of four categories.

- 1) Talk. The 'talk' programme can be as simple as one person speaking directly to the camera (talking head), or as complex as a series of interviews connected by a host's commentary (e.g. a teacher in front of a classroom, an expert being interviewed, or a professional narrator reading a script).
- 2) Demonstration. The demonstration type of programme uses the camera to show material which would otherwise be difficult for the audience to experience. This may include scientific experiments, distant and dangerous topics, and visual sequences organised for effect and contrast.
- 3) Combination of talk and demonstration. The problem with a programme that is all talk is that the audience can quickly get bored, even though the subject matter itself may be interesting. The problem with a programme that is all demonstration is that the information can be quite confusing in the absence of a description. For these reasons, most educational TV programmes try to combine both talk and demonstration. The decision about how much of the programme should be talk and how much should be demonstration largely depends on the topic, the presentation style of the person on the screen, and the production resources available.
- 4) Feature. The most complex TV/video format is a full feature, combining all types of presentation: talk/narrative, demonstration, dramatisation, and other kinds of illustration.

The development stages of TV/video programmes is a standard process involving pre-production, production, post-production, and evaluation.

Pre-production stage

The pre-production stage includes scheduling, budgeting, script-writing, and all other preparations for the production. It is the most critical stage, because it is the foundation upon which the rest of the programme is built. Lack of adequate pre-production preparation is likely to result in an unsatisfying programme. The most important process at this stage is the script-writing, for it helps:

- the director to clarify his ideas, and to develop a project that will work;
- to coordinate the production team; and
- to assess the resources needed by the production..

The type of script varies according to the type of TV/video format that will be produced. TV scripts can be classified in three ways (Macree, Monty & Worling, 1981).

- 1) Full script. This format includes detailed information on all aspects of the production, and gives a complete, continuous action sequence identified with scene numbers and locations. An individual scene can involve anything from an interview, to a song, dialogue, or demonstration sequence. The full script may use several types of programme format: e.g. drama, newscast, and narration.
- 2) Partially scripted. This format is not a complete word-for-word script, but provides a skeleton format on which the programme is built. It helps the production team to anticipate what is expected of it. Instructional programmes and demonstrations with non-professional performers may sound stilted if a full script is used, and a partially scripted format can help them to sound more natural.
- 3) Outline script. This type of script merely lists the general order of topics to be covered and the persons who will perform or improvise the narration and/or dialogue.

All material and dialogue in a script must be written for the ear, not for the eye, even though TV/video is a visual medium (Wurtzel & Acker, 1989). In writing a TV/video script, the following points should be remembered.

- *Carefully assess the audience*. It is important to base a TV/video script on information about the target audience. In deciding on the script's language and structure, the writer must begin with an awareness of the audience's prior levels of knowledge.
- *Avoid overloading the audience*. The production should be kept simple. This is a core principle in script-writing and production. It is more important to select the most important information, and to present a few topics that illustrate it well, than to cover many topics inadequately. A creative script-writer can balance words and images to provide just the right amount of information for communicating with the audience clearly.
- *Fit the treatment to the budget and facilities available*. The writer should always work within the production's capabilities and limitations. Ingenious use of available production techniques can overcome apparently impossible restrictions. It is therefore crucial for the writer to obtain information about the production budget and facilities before writing the script. A common mistake of novice script-writers is to write a script requiring resources that are unavailable.
- *Be visual*. It is important to present the materials in visual terms as far as possible, accompanied by as few words as are needed for clarification. Sometimes pictures can convey the information without commentary. In producing talk-show programmes, for example, it is better to illustrate the topic under discussion about rather than simple 'talking head' shots of the person who is speaking.

- *Develop a flow of ideas.* Aim for each topic and sequence to lead naturally into the next. The script should always deal with one subject at a time. Too much inter-cutting between different topics, and too many flash-backs and flash-forwards should be avoided.
- *Pace.* A good script balances the picture and the sound. This is not always easy, for the pace of the picture sequence may not correspond with the pace of the sound sequence. It is important, therefore, to edit out parts of the picture and/or commentary where necessary, so that the remaining audio/visual materials are well coordinated.

The writer should also understand the options available to the production in terms of camera angle; e.g.

- Long shot (LS): a wide panorama (e.g. person from head to foot);
- Medium shot (MS): part of a panorama (e.g. person from head to waist); and
- Close-up (CU): a detail (e.g. face).

Many other types of shot can be used according to the production's needs for visualisation: e.g. medium long shot (MLS), over-the-shoulder (OS), and extreme close-up (ECU). Other technical terms the writer can find useful relate to camera movements: e.g. panning, whereby the camera moves from one side to side); and tilt up or tilt down, whereby the camera moves up or down.

Two types of TV/video script are commonly used (Millerson, 1994).

- 1) Single-column script format. In this format, the video and audio information are presented in a single column. Before each scene, an explanatory introduction is given of the location and action (Table 1).

Table 1. Single-column TV/video script.

Video and Audio	
1)	<p>MONTAGE: hectic scene at Sukarno-Hatta international airport - monument welcoming visitors to Indonesia - busy traffic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambient sound • Background: traditional Balinese/ Sasando music
2)	<p>MONTAGE: Indonesia nature scenes: mountains, big rivers, forest, wild animals, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Narrator</u>: Indonesia is an archipelago country spreading as far as the European continent. The beautiful coasts, crystal blue ocean, panoramic mountain-sides, spectacular waterfalls, tranquil rivers, wide paddy fields, and other natural wonders give Indonesia different shades of colour and beauty.
3)	<p>MONTAGE: Indonesian ethnic groups: Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Nusa Teng-gara, Sumatera</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Narrator</u>: From west to east, various ethnic groups are united in their uniqueness.
4)	<p>MONTAGE: Ancient temples (Borobudur, Prambanan, Bali)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Narrator</u>: Different cultures, attitudes, panoramas, and religions make Indonesia rich in diversity.

- 2) Two-column script format. In this format, the script is divided into a video column and an audio column. The video column on the left contains important visual elements such as titles, graphics, special effects, and other visuals. The audio column contains the sound elements including the performer's dialogue, sound effects and music (Table 2).

Table 2. A two-column TV/video script.

VIDEO	AUDIO
1) MONTAGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hectic scene at Sukarno-Hatta international airport • monument welcoming visitors to Indonesia - busy traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambient sound • Background: traditional Balinese/Sasando music
2) MONTAGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia nature scenes: mountains, big rivers, forest, wild animals, etc. 	Indonesia is an archipelago country spreading as far as the European continent. The beautiful coasts, crystal blue ocean, panoramic mountain-sides, spectacular waterfalls, tranquil rivers, wide paddy fields, and other natural wonders give Indonesia different shades of colour and beauty.
3) MONTAGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesian ethnic groups: Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Nusa Teng-gara, Sumatera 	From west to east, various ethnic groups are united in their uniqueness.
4) MONTAGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient temples (Borobudur, Prambanan, Bali) 	Different cultures, attitudes, panoramas, and religions make Indonesia rich in diversity.

Production stage

The TV/video production stage can involve numerous personnel and complex equipment. At UT, the production of the finalised script is supervised by a programme director from the Non-Print Media Production Centre. The director is in charge of the entire production process beginning with the script breakdown, searching for locations, shooting, editing, and reviewing the programme. The production team varies in number according to the production's complexity. At some institutions, there are strict demarcations of function and roles, while in smaller units the function and roles of production team members may be shared. Typically, a production team includes the following key people:

- *Producer*: responsible for overall business organisation and budget; in smaller units the producer may also direct the production.
- *Director*: responsible for interpreting and staging the production; advises, instructs, and coordinates the production team; chooses, hires and directs the performers; guides and cues the performance either directly or through the floor manager; instructs the cameras, camera switcher, sound specialist, etc.; and supervises the post-production editing.
- *Assistant director*: takes notes from the director, and liaises with the crew.
- *Floor manager*: is the director's representative and contact in the studio; cues the performers; checks and directs the floor crew; and is responsible for general studio organisation, safety, and discipline.
- *Switcher*: operates the selection of cameras dictated by the director.
- *Technical director*: supervises and instructs technical facilities and operations; may operate the camera switches.
- *Camera operators*: responsible for all camera operations on the production.
- *Lighting director*: designs, arranges, and controls the lighting; supervises electricians in rigging and setting the lighting equipment.
- *Audio engineer*: a specialist operator responsible for the technical/artistic quality and balance of programme sound.
- *Video controller*: a specialist operator responsible for picture quality.
- *Make-up artist*: designs and applies the performers' make-up.
- *Set designer*: a specialist designer in charge of the scenic treatment.
- *Technicians*: responsible for the maintenance and adjustment of all electronic equipment.
- *Floor crew*: responsible for dress the studio sets, operating cue cards, etc.

Post-production stage

Once the raw programme material has been recorded, the post-production editing process combines the visuals, sound, and graphics into an effective sequence according to the script and programme objectives. The quality of editing depends not only on the editor's skills but also on those of the director. Working together, they add final touches that can have significant effects on the overall product. As in all other aspects of TV production, careful planning and work at this stage ensures the best programme possible. After it has been reviewed by the subject matter expert (SME) and media specialist, and necessary revisions have been completed, the master copy is duplicated and sent to the TV company to be broadcast according to a fixed schedule. UT also delivers its TV programmes by duplicating them on VCDs. The typical stages and roles of a TV production at UT are summarised in [Figure 1](#).

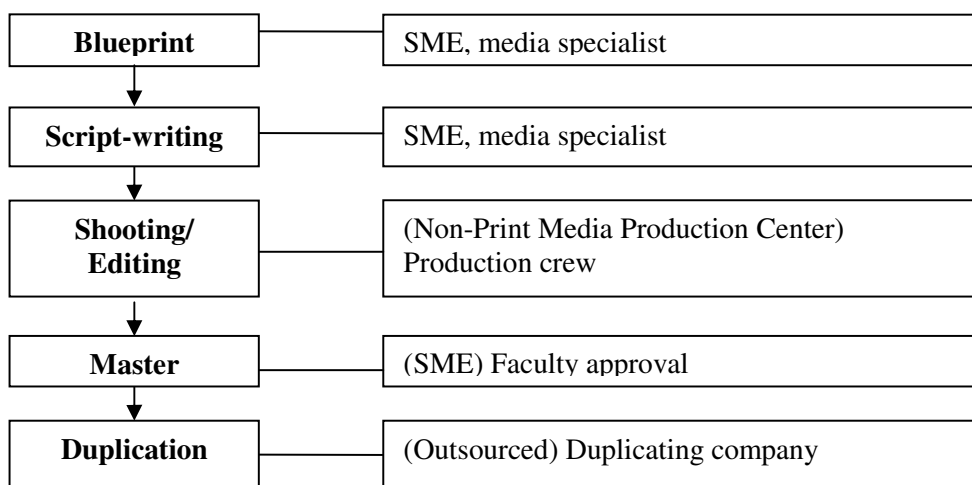


Figure 1. Stages of UT's TV/Video Programme Development.

At Universitas Terbuka (UT) in Indonesia, the development of a TV/video programme usually involves two institutional units: faculty and the Non-Print Media Production Centre. The TV/video programme's *blueprint* is written by a faculty member or hired specialist, assisted by a media specialist from the Non-Print Media Production Centre. The blueprint covers the programme's objectives, sub-topics, and presentation format (talk, feature demonstration, etc.). The next step is the script-writing by the faculty member, assisted by a media specialist who is responsible for presentation format, language style and others media issues. The process of script-writing includes a review of the content by the SME, and of the format and language by the media specialist. The script may take several months to complete, depending on the writer's experience. When it has been approved, it is ready to be produced. Production of a 30-minute programme takes about two weeks. The complete TV/video production process at UT is summarised in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Summary of the TV/video production process at UT (Padmo, 2006).

Source/Product	Pre-production	Production	Post Production
Human Resources	SME/ writer; instructional designer; media specialist	Director; camera operator; lighting engineer; art director; editor; floor manager (if needed); unit manager	SME/ writer; instructional designer;
Product	Script-writing	Draft of master programme	Evaluation result; master

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