Reflection

According to Crotty 'successful modern multimedia development (including animation) begins with planning and design.' (2012, Study Guide, Topic 4) Before production there were a lot of things I needed to sit down and get clear in my head and on paper. Miller stresses that structure is the 'unseen but all-important method of organising a work of interactive entertainment. ' (*Digital storytelling*, 2004, p 134.) I had to ask myself what am I trying to get across? What story am I trying to tell? I sat myself down and wrote out all of my ideas and thoughts. I then went through everything and created a believable and manageable structure to work with.

Thinking Animation highlights that 'a compelling story depends on clarity and simplicity' (Jones, 2006, p 33). I knew that I needed to keep everything clear and concise and not try and tell too much at a time in order to prevent confusion. So I basically broke it down in to sections where boy meets girl, they fall in love and whether they live; in a house or a tent, whether it be day or night, sunny or raining as long as they are together they are at home. The characters movements aren't dramatic and the drawings are very simple which allows the audience to easily understand and relate to what is going on. Although it is visually simplistic that doesn't mean it was simple to create. A lot of time and effort went in to getting the final result.

Originally I wanted to create a stop motion and physically have the backgrounds change in each photo however after some testing I came to the conclusion that this method was going to be too complicated for what I wanted to portray especially because I am a perfectionist. I then came up with the idea of actually filming the couple acting out the scenes in front of a green screen and then I could key it out and insert the changing backgrounds. A lot of preparation had to go into this to make sure I had everything I needed in the one shoot. I had to recreate the storyboard to suit my new method, find actors, set a time and book the equipment. I then had to key out all the background and edit each scene to the correct time and in the correct order.

I planned to create the backgrounds in flash and then insert them into the green screen footage however it wasn't going to be as simple as I had hoped. For one it was going to be hard to try and match up the timing and although it would work for things in the background it wouldn't work for anything that had to sit over the footage. I decided to just give it a white background, import the video into flash and create my drawings over the video layer. I also changed video to play with a lower frame rate to give it the stop motion effect that I was originally looking for.

When it came to choosing my characters for the animation I took in to consideration that 'emotion and empathy are the most important facets of storytelling in animation' (Jones, p 37) I needed my characters and their actions to be desirable and believable. By choosing an actual couple in real life to play the parts of the man and woman I feel that there was authenticity in their actions, which makes the story believable thus helping to create an emotional response in the audience

Sound became a very important factor in my animation as it is known to contribute as much as '70% to the success of a project' (Beauchamp, 2005. p 119). Crotty explains that sound has 'a huge effect on the pacing of your animation' (Study Guide, Topic 7). I knew I couldn't just pick and song to put on the animation after it was created, I needed to have my sounds and music prepared in order for me to edit the animation to work with the music. Once I picked my song I then found key areas in the music for certain things to happen to help pace my animation and give it dynamics.

Feedback from other students had a big impact in the development of my animation. Not only did the positive feedback give me motivation to continue with what was becoming a very slow and painful process but it was helpful to have an audience to make suggestions on how I could alter or improve my project.

I believe that the collaboration of the two worlds; real life and animation, gives it a real unique and interesting visual appeal. Although there are a lot of things I would have done differently if I had more time, I am extremely happy with my

final result and feel that it successfully communicates my story. This assignment was a great experiment and learning experience. It has enabled me to do things that I never thought I would be able to do. Through the course of creating the animation I learnt that as set as an idea is there will always be obstacles and things that change along the way but if you keep your plot well-defined in your head and see beginning middle and end clearly you will be able to create a solid story (Jones, p 57).

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