Reflection

The production of my animation was very rewarding. I feel I met all my goals for the project, and have learnt a lot along the way. I found the more I experimented and worked on the animation, I became more confident and much faster working with the Adobe Flash software. By midway through the production I was confidently reading the timelines for each scene, and working with the layers in the timeline efficiently.

Khazar (1997) explains that working and planning on paper first before beginning production is the best way to meet a production deadline on time. My planning at the pre-production stage with a very detailed story bard helped me keep on track with my animation. I was able to refer to the storyboard when I felt I was becoming lost and moving away from the original premise.

The initial development of the animation led to a few conundrums, the biggest problem I experienced was luckily at the start where I had difficulty realising my stage set and characters. The particular style and approach that I wanted to apply to my animation was beyond my graphic design capabilities. Because I was new to the realm of Flash at the commencement of this subject, I was not very confident at drawing in flash.

I discovered the best way for me to produce my animation was to complete the artwork for the animation in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, importing the images into Flash and converting them into symbols. McCloud (1993, in Wells, P. 2002) explains that representational graphic works are characterised by the movement from photorealistic to more iconic constructs. I originally though that my animation would take on a combination of iconic and photorealistic approach, but my design style naturally changed to a more iconic approach with the s use of Adobe Illustrator and solid vector lines.

Creating the characters, props, background and foreground in Illustrator led to the tedious task of importing a large amount of different images for the animation and converting them to symbols. To my advantage, the stage for the animation was a permanent object (the image of a window). By creating various layers within the window frame, I was able to make my character symbols move about and appear to be behind the window, and the viewer's looking in. This helped speed up production time, because once the background was created, the stage was set.

There were some changes made to the animation from that on the storyboard, including the introduction of a theme song, when played at critical parts of the animation it became more compelling, helps draw the viewer's attention and generates a greater entertainment factor.

When I created the storyboard I had not given much thought to the use of sound in the animation. At that stage I had not learnt how to import sound into Flash and synchronise the sounds with the animation. This was a big learning task for me, I have never worked with sound before, and I feel that I spent more time working on the sounds and synchronising than the visuals for this project.

The more I researched into the use of sound in animation, the more ideas and concepts were generated relating to sound. I like to believe that my animation developed into a more realistic and iconic production as the sound was incorporated into the work.

I decided to add the sound of footsteps walking on gravel at the beginning and the end of the animation to enhance the viewer's understanding of the narrative, it helped create a suggestion of someone outside that is unseen.

After testing the animation with an audience, the feedback that I gained was that there was not enough suggestion in the storyline to express to the audience that the girls in their rooms were being watched by someone outside. To help convey my message to the audience, I included a silhouette of branches rustling periodically in front of the character's houses, and a few eye blinks during the introduction and first scenes. I included sound for the rustling of leaves, which also enhanced the outdoor birds singing that I had already added to the animation, this helped convey that the scene is shot from outdoors.

The animation could have been enhanced with the incorporation of interactivity. Handler Miller (2004) refers the narrative line through an animation as a *critical story path.* For my project to become interactive with the audience, I would have to create different critical paths within the story for the audience to choose from, such as choosing different outfits for Emily to wear, Emily throwing something out the window at the viewer, or the viewer being invited into the house.

If I was given more time with the animation, I would have added a greater variety of facial expressions for the characters, and given the Character 'Emily' a larger variety of eccentric costumes to wear, put more design detail into the fore and background.

Reference List:

Khazar, J , Managing multimedia production, 24 September 1997, Macromedia Director Support Centre
http://www.macromedia.com/support/director/how/expert/manage/index.html
(accessed 24/5/12)

McLoud, S. 1993. In Wells, P.2002, *Animation Genre and authorship.* Wallflower Press: London, P.13

Handler Miller, C 2004, Chapter 7, in *Digital Storytelling, a creator's guide to interactive entertainment,* Elsevier/Focal Press, Burlington, MA, p 125.