

HL Collaborative Film

This document provides guidance for completion of the Comparative Study assessment for DP Film students.



Ed Wood (Tim Burton, 1994), starring Johnny Depp as 'the worst film director of all time.'

The Basics

Your group will need:

- An idea agreed upon by all members of the group.
- A set of identifiable and achievable filmmaker intentions.
- A plan of action, including shooting schedules and a timetable for completion of each stage of production.
- A screenplay that details all scenes, dialogue, and some of the shot types.
- A completed film lasting no more than seven minutes.
- A collaboratively-produced “logline” for the film, which summarises what the film is about in 50 words or less.

Each student will submit a copy of the completed film, with the logline, plus a project report of no more than 2000 words.

You are being assessed for this assignment in three distinct areas, even though they all overlap. Each student must:

- demonstrate skills in their one chosen **film production role** to successfully contribute to the overall effectiveness of the completed film
- justify the creative choices made in order to convey in meaning in the completed film in their one chosen **film production role**
- reflect on the process of collaboration and the successes and challenges encountered as members of the **core production team** in attempting to fulfill the intentions of the group.

When you write the project report, it should be divided into two sections of equal length. The first will justify the creative decisions you made in your chosen role, and the second will discuss how the core production team worked together. For instance, in the first part, you might discuss how you, as cinematographer, used low-key lighting and muted colours to create a frightening atmosphere for a horror film, and in the second part you might talk about how you worked alongside the editor and sound designer to enhance the atmosphere of a particular scene.

It is very important that you work together as a team to develop a film, and that you reflect upon your role as an individual contributor, as well as the collaborative work of the group as a whole. You must evaluate and analyse your work to assess how effectively you fulfilled your intentions in your role, and how the group were able to achieve their stated intentions.

Assessment Criteria

This assignment is internally assessed, externally moderated. You should familiarise yourself with the assessment criteria so that you know what examiners are looking for and how you will be graded.

A. Demonstration of skills in one chosen film production role

Evidence: The completed film (including black slate which clearly states the film’s title, logline and one film production role taken).

- To what extent does the student demonstrate skills in their one chosen film production role that successfully contribute to the overall effectiveness of the completed film?

Mark	Descriptor	Some possible characteristics
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	
1–2	This work is limited . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work in one film production role demonstrates an undeveloped level of ability in the student’s production skills (as appropriate to the one role), evidencing rudimentary techniques and/or approaches that are largely ineffective and/or detract from the overall effectiveness of the film. 	Basic Ineffective Rudimentary Unsuccessful
3–4	This work is adequate . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work in one film production role demonstrates an acceptable level of ability in the student’s production skills (as appropriate to the one role), evidencing some appropriate techniques and/or approaches that partially contribute to the overall effectiveness of the film. 	Acceptable Standard Sufficient Typical
5–6	This work is good . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work in one film production role demonstrates clear proficiency in the student’s production skills (as appropriate to the one role), evidencing clear and suitable techniques and/or approaches that mostly contribute to the overall effectiveness of the film. 	Capable Clear Effective Robust
7–8	This work is excellent . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work in one film production role demonstrates a sophisticated level of proficiency in the student’s production skills (as appropriate to the one chosen role), evidencing highly effective techniques and/or approaches that successfully contribute to the overall effectiveness of the film. 	Accomplished Finessed Honed Refined

B. Justification of creative work in one film production role

Evidence: Project report and sources.

- To what extent does the student justify the creative choices made in order to convey meaning in their one film production role during the production phases?

Mark	Descriptor	Some possible characteristics
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	
1–2	<p>This work is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student provides an undeveloped or incomplete outline of their creative choices in one film production role during the production phases. This work is limited in scope and contains mainly irrelevant or superfluous information. 	Basic Incomplete Ineffective Rudimentary Superficial
3–4	<p>This work is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student provides a useful description of their creative choices in order to convey meaning in one film production role during the production phases. This work is more descriptive than analytical and/or lacks clear justification of choices. 	Acceptable Reasonable Standard Suitable Sufficient Typical
5–6	<p>This work is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student provides a detailed and informative explanation of their creative choices in order to convey meaning in one film production role during the production phases. This work is accurate and partially justified. 	Competent Balanced Proficient Relevant Thoughtful
7–8	<p>This work is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student provides a thorough and discerning justification of their creative choices in order to convey meaning in one film production role during the production phases. This work is detailed, accurate and relevant. 	Compelling Finessed Honed Insightful Mature Sophisticated

C. Reflection on collaboration in the core production team

Evidence: Project report and sources.

- To what extent does the student reflect on the process of collaboration and the successes and challenges encountered as member of the core production team in attempting to fulfill the agreed intentions of the group?
- To what extent does the student cite informative moments or examples from within the completed film to support their reasoning?

Mark	Descriptor	Some possible characteristics
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	
1–2	<p>This work is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides a superficial or unjustified reflection on the successes and challenges of their participation in the core production team. The student outlines the ways in which their collaborations supported the group, but this is not clearly linked to agreed intentions or is limited in scope. • The student does not reference relevant moments or examples from within the completed film to support their reasoning. 	Basic Incomplete Ineffective Rudimentary Superficial
3–4	<p>This work is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides a useful reflection on the successes and challenges of their participation in the core production team, describing how their collaborations helped to fulfill the agreed intentions of the group • The student suggests some indicative moments or examples from within the completed film to support their reasoning. 	Acceptable Reasonable Standard Suitable Sufficient Typical
5–6	<p>This work is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides a meaningful reflection on the successes and challenges of their participation in the core production team, explaining how their collaborations helped to fulfill the agreed intentions of the group • The student cites relevant moments or examples from within the completed film to support their reasoning. 	Competent Balanced Proficient Relevant Thoughtful
7–8	<p>This work is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides an insightful reflection on the successes and challenges of their participation in the core production team, discussing how their collaborations helped to fulfill the agreed intentions of the group • The student cites informative moments or examples from within the completed film to support their reasoning. 	Compelling Finessed Honed Insightful Mature Sophisticated

Tips for success in this assignment

- Plan effectively and give yourself plenty of time to complete this assignment to a high standard. If your planning is effective and detailed, the production will be relatively straightforward, even though it will be a long, slow process at times. So, give yourself time and start planning early.
- Collaborate as much as possible. This is not only a requirement of the assignment, but the best way to make a good film: good collaboration will ensure that your film demonstrates *unity*, all of its parts working together to create meaning and effects.
- When choosing the subject and the story for your film, remember that you're making a *short* film. Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most effective, so don't feel like you need to squeeze an epic narrative and lots of themes into seven minutes.
- Keep a production diary containing notes about the production. You can write down a diary of everything that happened as you were making your film, but you should definitely focus on the following things: what you planned to do, and what you did in your individual role as part of the crew of the film; how you collaborated with the rest of the Core Production Team.
- Be very clear about your intentions as your filmmakers. 'Intentions' might refer to many things, but most importantly, you need to know what story you are trying to tell, and the mood you want to communicate to your audience. You *must* clearly explain what your intentions for your film were in your project report, and evaluate how successful you were in achieving them. You may also have intentions in your individual role: for example, you can explain in your report that you chose a particular type of lighting because you *intended* to create a certain effect or feeling in the finished film.
- Read the assessment criteria carefully and reflect upon how you can meet them. You don't have design something that does what you think examiners want to see (because they want to see original things that they might be surprised by), but you should at least know what is expected so that your film meets the requirements (e.g. the maximum length of 7 minutes will be strictly enforced, and there are detailed guidelines about the use of music and copyright materials) and breaks no rules.
- Shoot test footage. Record rehearsals. Even if you don't end up using the test footage, some of it might be usable in your Production Portfolio to demonstrate, for example, your development as a cinematographer (please note you cannot use footage from your Collaborative Film in your Film Portfolio, but you may ending up choosing a different work to submit for the collaborative film). You should also keep evidence of emails, meetings, storyboards and other documentation of your filmmaking process. This can and should be incorporated into your project report. Examiners love to see visual evidence.
- Take care over your work. The best student films are often those that show attention to the smallest details.
- Ask your teacher questions if you're unsure of anything.

Roles

You can only be assessed for one role each. No film can be submitted with two editors, for example. It is part of the collaborative process that you find ways to work together and divide the work up equally, allowing each other to contribute and add individual strengths to the group.

You will form a Core Production Team from the five main roles (Director, Writer, Sound/Music, Cinematographer, Editor). You may also engage students from outside the DP film class, from anywhere in the school. If there are fewer than five in the CPT, you may need to take on additional responsibilities beyond those in your main role. This might be more work, but it will help you to score better for Criterion C, because you can comment on what you did to help the group achieve its filmmaker intentions beyond your main role.

The five roles may require different levels of involvement at different stages of the production. This does not mean you can disengage from the process, but rather that you need to plan your time well and stay in contact with the group.

On the next pages are some notes from the Examiners about what is expected from each role, and what evidence can be included in the Project Report to demonstrate skill and reflection in that role.

Director

This role requires the student to distribute equal time during each part of the production. The director's role involves overall control of the artistic and dramatic aspects of the film, guiding the technical crew and actors to transform the script from page to screen.

The director's report should present a complete picture of the production process as well as present the student's work in his or her chosen role. Among other observations, the artistic and logistic analysis of the finished film will require all students, regardless of their role, to participate throughout the entire production process. Evidence for the role of director in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following:

Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production
A clear explanation of the vision or concept behind the film, including the reasons for wanting to make this film	Production notes for each day of shooting—before and after: a set of expectations for the day and a list of what was achieved or not achieved; notes on ways to solve problems	Evidence of working with the editor and discussion of decisions made and why
Evidence of research into the genre/style of the film	Ongoing discussions with key production team members and actors and evidence of instructions to them	Changes between the initial script and the final version, as well as an evaluation and justification of the changes
Clear influences from other films —be specific and name directors/cinematographers/composers/costume designers, and so on		Discussion of reactions to the final cut
Evidence of consultations with the cinematographer/editor/sound designer—include notes, emails, storyboards, photos, drawings where appropriate		Evaluation of the film, both technically and artistically. Did it achieve the original vision?
Evidence of location scouting		
Evidence of casting decisions		
Evidence of permission to shoot at locations		
Evidence of scheduling with call sheets		

Cinematographer

A cinematographer’s project report will be focused on the production stage more than most other roles. Since the responsibilities of the cinematographer involve the creation of the image—both in terms of camera angle and movement—and lighting, much of the cinematographer’s work will take place during the shoot. Evidence for the role of cinematographer in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following:

Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production
Test shoots using different focal lengths, camera placement, and so on	Evidence of camera preparation, movement, angles, shot design (the main focus of this role)	Evidence of continued contribution with director and editor through advice, assistance and any scheduled re-shoots as a result of the editing process
Lighting tests in the actual locations	Description of choices made when selecting shot types with justifications	Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)
Checklist of equipment for the shoot	Evidence of how lighting design was used to create mood, atmosphere, and perhaps even genre	
Evidence of collaboration with the director to negotiate how mise en scène, locations and lighting will be handled	Evidence of consultation with the editor about the coverage needs for the film	
Documented workflow showing your set-up sequence	Evidence of alternative shots and why you chose the one used in the final film	
Map of each location showing camera placement/camera movement	Identification of problems encountered during shooting and how you solved them	
Notations on storyboards	An evaluation of your camerawork and lighting on an artistic level as well as technical level	
Map of each location showing lighting	Identification of influences from films you have seen — name the cinematographer	
Map of each location showing character blocking/movement		

Editor

An editor's project report will be focused on the post-production stage more than most other roles. The main area of focus will be the pacing and rhythm of the final film, and making sure the cut effectively communicates to the audience. Focus in the commentary should be on pacing and narrative rhythm, the creation of tension, as well as editing styles (continuity or montage) and the effects of specific edits (straight cuts, dissolves, fades in and fades out) in terms of narrative purpose. The report should be focused on creativity and creation of narrative, mood, and atmosphere rather than discussing how the editor dealt with mistakes. It may be necessary to discuss how the editor used editing to cope with problems that occurred in the shoot. Evidence for the role of editor in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following:

Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production
Test shoots using different focal lengths, camera placement, and so on	Evidence of collating rushes from the filming, labelling and storing the footage to enable an organized edit process	Evidence of discussions with the director and justification for choices
Evidence of planning with the cinematographer on shot types to help editing		Test edits
Influences of editing from films you have seen—name the editor		Evidence of continued contribution with director
Notations on storyboards to plan a rough edit plan or pre-visualization		Before/after evidence using screenshots of your editing software
		Before/after evidence of colour correction or special effects (such as screenshots of various stages of development)
		Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)

Sound designer

This role is a combination of roles, and like the director, will probably require the student to distribute equal time during each part of the production. For a sound designer, recordist, mixer to be assessed in this task, the finished film should rely on the use of sound as an integral part of the production process.

During pre-production, the report should present evidence of the sound designer carefully going over scripts and storyboards with the director in order to decide what sound will be necessary for the production. In some cases, this may require foley (sound that is performed, such as knocking on a door or the sound of footsteps), which will have to be recorded by the students themselves and not taken from existing sound effects libraries. In other cases it may require designed sound, that is, recorded sounds that will be altered in a program such as GarageBand® or Audacity®. Sometimes for safety reasons students may need to use sounds from a pre-existing sound package (such as explosions). If original sound work can safely be created, however, then the work of the sound designer, recordist and mixer will be much easier to evaluate. During production, sound must be captured on set. This may require working the boom mike, making sure sound capture is accurate, and many other tasks that are the responsibility of the recordist. During post-production, the major role will be as the mixer for the project, creating a mix of sound effects and dialogue to create a pleasing effect for the audience, as well as mood, atmosphere and drama.

Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production
Test recordings in the actual locations—make note of problems/ solutions and make note of best settings on the recorder	Evidence of capturing sound on set as part of the shoot	Consideration of how effective your sound design is on an artistic level as well as a technical level
Making a checklist of equipment	Evidence of how you created the foley sounds and how this was captured	Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)
Making a workflow showing your recording set-up sequence	Evidence of collating sound material, labelling and storing the footage to enable an organized edit process	
Evidence of discussions with the director and justification for choices	Description of choices you made with justifications	
Map of each location showing placement of the recording equipment	Consideration of how music has been composed or created with a composer and the director	
Problems during recording and how you solved them	Consideration of what has influenced the musical score	
Influences from films you have seen—name the sound designer		
A list of foley sounds needed for the film— should include times		

Screenwriter

A screenwriter's report will be focused on the pre-production stage more than most other roles. Finding the idea, research, treatment, and finally script development as the project moves through pre-production will be the focus of much of the commentary. The student should be sure to include samples of research, of how drafts of the script developed, and how other parts of the pre-production phase (such as the creation of storyboards) affected the development of the script. Casting may also be significant and other preparation may be central to development of the script. The screenwriter's commentary should present a complete picture of the production process as well as present the student's work in his or her chosen role. Among other observations, the artistic and logistic analysis of the finished film will require all students, regardless of their role, to participate throughout the entire production process. It is likely that some details of the collaboration with the director, at least, will be presented.

If a student is taking on the writing role, the script should (in almost all cases) have dialogue as an aspect of the work. With a silent film there is so much work focused on the creation of image by others that the screenwriter role will be hard to assess. Evidence for the role of screenwriter in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following.

Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production
Multiple drafts of script with explanations of developments/ changes	Evidence of contribution to the shooting script	Evidence of any further input, such as additional dialogue, provided during post- production
Evidence of characterization development	Challenges faced during shooting and how you solved them	An evaluation of your script on an artistic level as well as technical level
Clear influences from movies— name the screenwriters	Any on site re- writes during production	Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)
Pitch	Any assistance given to the director when working with actors	
Treatment		
Correctly formatted script		
Identifying costume/ props that help characterization		

Suggested Topics:

There are few rules about the subject matter of your film. It can be about anything you want, but please note the guidelines about ethical filmmaking:

Ethical filmmaking

DP film students must be supported in maintaining an ethical perspective during their course. Schools must be vigilant to ensure that work undertaken by the student is appropriate for the context of the school and the age of the students.

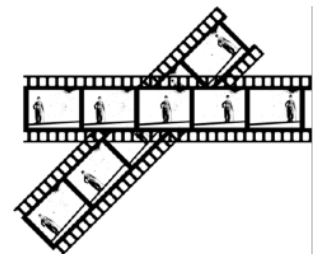
Student work for this assessment task must not:

- damage the environment
- glamorize the taking of drugs
- inappropriately reference socially taboo subjects
- incite or condone intolerance or hatred of others
- include excessive or gratuitous violence
- make reference to, or represent, explicit sexual activity.

Your film may be a fictional narrative, an abstract experimental film, a documentary on a subject that you are passionate about ... there are no limits, as long as you are clear in your intentions and objectives, and you create a plan to achieve those intentions.

Some genres are more difficult than they seem. Here are some examples of where you might encounter difficulties, based on previous students' experiences:

- If you choose to imitate an established genre, be aware that you're setting yourselves up for comparison with films from that genre. For instance, it might be fun to try and make a superhero movie, but you will have to find ways to do that don't end up making your film look cheap by comparison.
- Comedy is difficult. Things that might seem really funny to you while you're making up your story might not seem funny when you shoot them, and if the joke is private to you and your team, don't expect examiners or other audiences to be amused in the same way. This goes for scary things, too: if you want to achieve a particular effect or emotional reaction, plan carefully and think about *how* you can use film techniques to do it. Think back to when you were analysing films and looking at how professional filmmakers create certain effects.
- Don't try to compress a feature-length story into a short film. It is difficult to tell the story of someone's entire life in under seven minutes.
- Horror films can be effective if you focus on controlling the atmosphere and pacing to build up to frightening events. Look at examples of things you find frightening in films for inspiration.



In choosing a topic, there are things you may need to think about as you begin planning. Is your idea achievable with the given resources and in the given time? Be ambitious but be realistic. Do you have access to the locations you need to shoot your film? Do you have actors capable of performing what you're asking them to do?

Collaborative Film Suggested Stages:

Pre-production



Writing:

- Generating ideas
- Pitching ideas and choosing the best one(s) for development
- Researching the work of other filmmakers
- Structuring a story
- Character development
- Writing a treatment
- Screenwriting, including dialogue
- Storyboarding: visualising the story shot-by-shot

Planning & Development:

- Scheduling
- Casting actors
- Location scouting
- Permissions and contacts for locations
- Equipment lists (props, costumes, technical apparatus)
- Actor Rehearsals
- Test shoots, experiments

Production



Shooting:

- Filming all footage, including multiple takes of each scene
- Recording sound
- Gathering additional sound and music, creating sound effects libraries
- Reviewing footage to check quality
- Keeping records of the production

Post-production



Editing:

- Assembling shots into sequences and scenes precisely
- Matching audio to images
- Colour-grading the footage
- Mixing audio
- Adding titles and visual effects
- Test screenings, audience feedback

Collaboratively:

In the pre-production phase, you will work together to approve the group's story ideas and establish the filmmaker intentions. You will plan for how to achieve these intentions.

Individually:

You will research your own role, find out what it requires and build upon your experience of filmmaking up to this point. You will plan a schedule for action to achieve your contributions to the group's filmmaker intentions.

Collaboratively:

In the production phase, you will work together to shoot all of the necessary footage for the film. Good collaboration will mean that this demanding phase is completed promptly and efficiently, with care and attention over the scenes you will shoot.

Individually:

Whatever your role, you should be involved in the shooting: if you're the writer, you might help actors to think about their characters and the meaning of the story; if you're the editor, you can help on set to ensure that the team captures all the footage you need to assemble the sequences you have planned.

Collaboratively:

The post-production phase is where the team assembles the film into its finished form. This involves editing of image and sound to make sure that the story is told clearly and effectively. You should all have input in deciding on the final cut of your film.

Individually:

Your contribution at this stage will vary according to your role, but you should aim to make sure that you are helping to achieve the group's filmmaker intentions and matching your own work to the needs of the group as a whole.