

**Teacher's Notes**  
**for**  
***Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics* 5th Ed.**  
By Michael Rabiger and Mick Hurbis-Cherrier

These notes, mostly addressed to teachers and film schools offering a directing focus for the first time, offer practical guidance on how to make use of *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics* 5th ed. under a varying range of student, teacher, and institutional circumstances. The book is designed as a huge toolkit to use and amend while you achieve your teaching ends. The notes are in three sections:

- INTRODUCTION (p2) explains the book's underlying approach and the classroom and other organizational issues that the instructor may confront.
- FAQ: TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS (p7) is organized as a series of questions you might ask—of your students, of yourself, or of me.
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## INTRODUCTION

*Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics* concentrates on what the beginner and the professional alike will find most challenging, that is, how to:

- Find stories that are dramatically rich and make good cinema
- Define a storytelling approach that stamps the film with an authorial identity
- Develop a script from a director's point of view
- Develop an appropriate and revealing aesthetic approach
- Understand the visual language of cinema and use it expressively
- Cast actors who may or may not be professional
- Use a rehearsal and development technique to form an ensemble (vital for low-budget production where the director can seldom hire experienced players)
- Make a shooting schedule and plans for shooting
- Develop a crew
- Shoot
- Edit the material into a fully functioning story

Implicit is the idea that making films, like functioning in any other art form, has an artistic process whose guidance comes from within. This is wealth untapped in most students, whose education has taught them that learning to function in the world requires that they inhibit their feelings and instincts, and learn “the proper way” to do everything. Those that come from arty families, or have had theater or art school training, will know differently. The rest have to be pried away from the notion that films come from an alchemy inherent in expensive equipment.

*Let your passions show.* The opening PART in the book appeals to the latent idealism of those attracted to the cinema, and I believe it important that teachers encourage students' humane principles and ambitions. Let your students see who you are and what moves you. Good teaching helps students connect with their latent passions. Can it be any accident that my lifelong interests (and perhaps yours too) reflect those of my best teachers?

*Point of view and collaboration.* The book stresses that good fiction comes from a passionate observation of life. Above all, film is a construct implying a storyteller's point of view. In fiction filmmaking, this comes from a consortium of minds, a commonality that arises out of collaboration and dialogue—a powerful factor in making film of any kind. A film class is special because it is a laboratory for shared creativity, a form of collaboration notable by its absence from most contemporary education.

*The audience is like a jury.* A film sets out to build a bridge between its audience and fictional characters in fictional situations. As with documentary, the quality and relevance of the evidence that the film presents, and the verve with which it is presented, determines the journey the audience takes, and any ideas and convictions about the

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human condition that they take home afterwards.

*Film language*, the book explains that, in fiction films as in documentary, film is really an artful approximation to human perceptual processes. Films are streams of consciousness designed for audiences to experience. Thus all wise camera and editing decisions are modeled on how to construct a humanly integrated stream of consciousness rather than one that is mechanically derivative of cinema stereotypes. Making films becomes a fascinating study, therefore, of ourselves as living, moving, acting and reacting beings. Teach with this in mind, and you will captivate your students and thrust them into an art form rather than the technological jungle they anticipate.

*Teaching is really learning*. Out in the world as you experience a range of feelings and impressions, any of them might become a film, so you lead your life more purposefully and consciously. Make a film, and you discover what level of consciousness you can sustain on the screen. Teach, and you see many people tackling similar tasks in different ways, so you learn with, and from, them. Teaching makes one a better teacher, a better person, and a better filmmaker too. Students should be encouraged to teach and learn among themselves for this reason.

*Learning from doing*. Students in all fields of study learn best from doing, and this is especially true in filmmaking. The simplest production is like learning to juggle, because it involves handling a great many dynamic variables. Even were it possible to deliver a thorough intellectual preparation, most students could only absorb a fraction of it before needing to put theory into practice. Projects and theory should therefore advance hand in hand. Making films is not unique in this regard: to learn dancing you must dance, and to learn swimming you must use water. *Directing* thus includes acting exercises (in the book) and shooting projects (on the companion website), each with its own authorial and production objectives. Like nothing else they will help your students develop real-world skills. Students learn most enthusiastically from work they find challenging, engaging, and mind-expanding. Thankfully the digital age provides us with superb and affordable media for the task. A teacher's job is no longer figuring out how to give any practical experience, but how to construct as thorough and fascinating an obstacle course as students' time and abilities permit.

*Conceiving and controlling fiction*: This book is not a technical primer, though it describes much that a director must know. When it describes technology and techniques, it does so in necessarily broad terms. Given the pace at which the digital domain is evolving, it would be futile to make hard and fast recommendations. Happily, most institutions can draw upon those technocrats among their faculty and senior students who have spontaneously made themselves expert in digital tools. Whether formally or informally employed, these wizards usually make excellent "tech" instructors. Harder and more demanding is to teach how to make acted stories that grip and inform an audience. This is the book's primary focus, along with preparing the reader for every stage of the artistic process. This gets regularly lost amid the delightful turmoil of fiction-making's industrial process. More than anything, this explains why so many beginning fictional

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screenworks are more deeply flawed than their documentary counterparts.

*From the ground up:* The book presumes no prior knowledge. Most of your students will need basic training in constructing cinema language and using digital equipment. The graduated shooting projects on the companion website are really vehicles for students to discover and self-teach in each area that a director must know. Doing and doing again is the only viable way to develop skills and standards in such a complex medium.

*You, your students, and setting learning goals:* Schools, their curricula, equipment levels, and students vary greatly, so it's impossible to say how best to use *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*. Not even the most thorough syllabus does more than scratch the surface of directing, which takes years of experience. Most who direct go on developing into old age—as long as they can stand up.

You, better than anyone, will know what you teach best, what your students bring to the table, and under what constraints of time and equipment your classes have to function. The book is anyway so comprehensive that you will have to make use of it selectively. By choosing astutely, you can guide your students into using what works best for them at their particular level of education and development. When they no longer have classes or a formal learning structure, the book will be there to keep supplying ideas, methods, and reassurance.

Here is what most arriving students seem to know best and worst:

*Where students are knowledgeable*

The area in which they need the least conceptual help is editing—with their 18,000 hours of watching TV, students take to it like ducks to water. Many will do an astonishingly professional job of structuring and pacing fictional or documentary material. That part of the process is assured of success.

*Technical education*

Most students need help developing basic camera and microphone handling techniques before they can get anything like the results they are used to seeing from the screen. Most are far more sophisticated visually than aurally. Only musicians, it would seem, have any experience of critical and analytic listening. This you may have to teach. Digital camcorders and DSLRs continue to improve and to provide more and more control to the user. It's important to get students making stories, even if that means using automatic features at first. Classes can easily get hung up for weeks learning stuff that often distances the more creatively inclined. Stress the dialogue with the audience from the start, and contextualize the techie stuff as the tools with which we express ourselves creatively. The technical side of filmmaking is not just about what buttons to push. Nearly every technical variable offers a range of creative possibilities. Never forget that this is a medium of *communication*, a place to speak from the heart and mind to an audience.

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### *Conceptual education*

The obstacles to good fiction filmmaking are formidable:

- Choosing (or writing) cinematic stories. Beginning student films are remarkably consistent from country to country, which says something about the ubiquity of television. They need challenging as writers and thinkers if they are to reach below the surface of their experience (see my *Developing Story Ideas* Focal Press, for a series of writing exercises that are designed to teach dramaturgy).
- Developing their story expressly for the strengths of the screen and its audience. This swims against the current of a show-and-tell commercial culture, with its heavy emphasis on words.
- Achieving brevity and compression, that is, making cinema art rather than mimicking the prolixity and circularity of life.
- Casting, especially when no professional players are available.
- Developing actors into an ensemble before shooting. This is the only avenue of success for independent filmmakers who must often rely on non-actors.
- Allowing the piece to be influenced by its players' strengths and particularity. The artistic process behind making an effectively linear film is not the linear manufacturing job that students expect but circular, and involves endless experimental drafts.
- Holding on to the dramaturgical and storytelling consciousness that allows the industrial process of directing to become humanly expressive.

*Student expectations:* All students, individually and as a group, start with a preponderance of expectations and prejudices, so you'll need a good idea of what your students expect to get out of the course. Your part, of course, will be to prioritize and decide what they can learn and accomplish in the available time. Attaching learning goals to the syllabus and to each project is useful because students know from the outset where they are supposed to be heading. The outcomes assessment forms in this website signal this, and let you report back on their success in each important aspect. About the forms themselves: even where no grid lines are visible, they are constructed in standard Microsoft Word tables, so I encourage you to add, subtract, or edit as you see fit.

*Forming groups and who's in charge of what:* Making films is collaborative, so you will need to form your class into production groups of, say, five persons. When students already know each other, they sometimes have fixed ideas about whom they want to work with. This may not be optimal for learning. But by making a simple skills and availability questionnaire you can solicit information to help form more rational choices for the groups. It's good to distribute skills and genders so you don't have a group containing, say, three cameramen. Some students will have their own equipment, so it's good to distribute them so groups are evenly equipped.

Especially in the beginning, everyone needs basic experience. Some will try to corral the most cherished positions. Apart from this being unfair, premature specialization actively prevents students getting the holistic understanding of filmmaking they will need. So, to ensure that each group member gets comprehensive experience, I suggest you ask that,

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- Students stay in the same group for the duration of the semester.
- Group members rotate through all the major creative roles (director, camera operator, shooting sound, and editing).

Under some circumstances, such as when shooting improves, the camera operator has to take most of the shooting decisions, so a two-person crew may be in order, with the director shooting sound, and remaining group members serving as actors. Coverage requiring careful lighting will need a larger crew, so you may amalgamate groups for more tech-heavy projects.

Some aspects of the project work, such as critical writing, researching or directing a complex film, may primarily be under the control of one person, but most work is teamwork and the organization of the team, after firm guidelines are laid down, can come from the team itself. As groups accrue experience, and members recognize each other's capacities and talents, people tend to naturally specialize. How soon you let your students specialize may hinge on whether to shoot for the best-produced projects or the broadest education. Too much specialization too early can deny directing experience to, say, a camera operator and relegate him or her to being a good rather than ideal collaborator.

Some cinema schools require their students to opt for roles on entry to the academy, and fix the division of labor from the outset. I believe it essential for each person to taste, however temporarily, the responsibilities and decisions governing the lives of their collaborators. This helps each become more tolerant and respectful of the others, and helps each acquire experience on which to found their choices and ambitions. While nearly all students harbor a desire to direct, only a taste of directing will send them satisfied into one of the crafts that they do better.



## FAQ: TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

How you configure groups, and what set of experiences you construct for their education will depend on a number of variables, which I'll present as an FAQ list:

- 1) **Who am I teaching?** Undergraduates, or graduate (“post-graduate” in European parlance) students? Are you leading a special interest or other professional or semi-professional group? And what kind of students does your institution draw? For instance:
  - i) A polytechnic teaching fiction filmmaking probably draws the technically minded. You might therefore budget less time teaching the science behind sound and video recording, and do more to develop conceptual, narrative and editing skills.
  - ii) Young undergraduate students may come with excellent computer skills, but have no experience of writing and conceptualizing, or of giving and taking criticism. They will need to learn about the profound bank of inner experience they must call on if they are to collaborate in an art form.
  - iii) Students in a fine art school might have to concentrate more on the physics of light and sound. They may understand individual expression very well but be much less intuitive when using editing software or production hardware. You may also have to persuade them to collaborate with each other instead of instinctively competing for distinction (after the model of artist as isolated seer). Narrative skills are frequently underdeveloped in individuals first drawn to painting, photography, or sculpture. They tend to see in a static and symbolic way, rather than in the dynamics of drama.
  - iv) Graduate students may be making a career change and arrive wanting to use film to further the work they have been doing professionally. This might be in advertising, the juvenile justice system, or local politics. Without efforts on your part to broaden their idea of effective drama, they may try to operate entirely within television traditions in which law enforcement and medical emergencies create heroic stereotypes.
  
- 2) **What preparation do my students have?** To determine this, try defining their strengths and deficiencies:
  - a) Conceptual. What do they know about the purpose, history, and range of fiction, both in literature and film? What do they know about narrative traditions, in particular the dramatic ingredients that go into “telling a good story”?
  - b) Film literacy. What do they know about the evolution of film as a medium? What do they know about the range of film language and its relationship to traditions of literature, theater, painting and other imagery?

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- c) Artistic. What can you expect your students to know about the self-exploration that is endemic to the artistic process? Are they sophisticated about using film as a medium of expression and self-expression? How well are they likely to understand the need to *act on* the viewer, rather than to passively record and reflect what is “there”?
  - d) Self-expressive. Some social classes and cultures encourage individual expression and some frown on it as blatant egotism. Some make it politically dangerous to have ideas or a conscience of your own. But self-awareness is to the arts what brushes are to paint: you will have to stress authorship as a necessary counterweight to the consuming industrial process of filming. You will need to develop a critical self-awareness in your students so they appreciate that they already carry, albeit unconsciously, a developed and critical point of view. This alone allows them recognize what is humanly authentic and is very different from intellectually imposed ideas. Unfortunately, many film appreciation classes teach students not to feel and respond, but to intellectualize. This can delay students from developing independent judgment.
  - e) Critical. How critical are your students of the world around them, and how prepared are they to develop a critical tension in their work?
  - f) Technical. Presuming they are computer literate, how much time will be consumed teaching the fundamentals of camerawork, sound recording, and editing?
  - g) Collaborative. Have they worked with others before? Do they know each other and have preferences for working together? Will you need to determine who has particular skills, and distribute these people equably through the groups? How will you prepare them to hierarchical or shared decisions?
- 3) **How should I develop appropriate coursework?** You will need to:
- a) *Assess the goals of entering students.*
    - i) If the class is required, then the department has probably set goals, or needs to. Your job will be to build a bridge between your students and the competencies that the curriculum demands.
    - ii) If the class is an elective you will need to integrate your students’ goals as well as those you set yourself, or they won’t enjoy the course enough to recommend it to others. What kind of experience are they looking for? With what skills do they hope to emerge? If you have to train their sights on a more realistic target, how will you finesse the transition?
    - iii) Where do the students go next and what will they need from you to perform well?
  - b) *Acknowledge that people learn in different ways.* Some prefer to understand the theory of a thing before embarking on actually doing it. Theory can become a refuge from doing. Such individuals have a high capacity for abstract thinking. Most only discover what they need to know through *making* something and from confronting degrees of failure in its effectiveness. For those who want a great deal of information prior to production, you have *Directing*. It’s a 24/7 resource for

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- those who want to know first and do later, or who do first and inquire what they should have done after seeing concrete results. For those weaned on multiple choice exams, I found I had to develop quiz questions that week by week forced people into applying their hitherto unused faculties (thanks, public education ...). In discussions I would press people without answers into reasoning their own way to an answer, just as one has to do in the field.
- c) *Take approximate decisions* about
- i) How much historical overview will benefit your students. What will they reject as “ancient history” until they have tackled some pioneering problems themselves and are ready to tread in the footsteps of their forebears?
  - ii) What projects you want them to undertake in order to develop particular skills and outlooks.
  - iii) How much work you can reasonably expect your students to complete in the given time.
  - iv) What films to show in order to inform and enthuse your students about their project work. Finding good short fiction is really hard.
- 4) **What are my strengths as a teacher?** Most teachers feel deficient in either teaching experience or production skills—or both. Don’t be discouraged: figure out how to use your strengths to best advantage. You should cast the work your students are going to do in your own most effective mode, at least until experiment leads you toward other equally effective modes.
- a) *How are you used to teaching*, and how do you best engage your students? You may like to give lectures, or you may excel in a more Socratic mode of questioning and evoking discussion. You may like to set problems for the students to solve, and let discussion of principles arise out of their efforts at problem-solving. You may take the risky path of instructing students in technology and then letting them determine what they want to film. Begin with whatever mode will work for you, and develop your ideas as you go. If you don’t make yourself comfortable, your students won’t feel secure either.
  - b) *Do you teach from a body of production experience?* It’s helpful but by no means vital.
    - i) *If you have some production experience*: Is it on the technical or on the conceptual side? Few filmmakers have all-round experience, so inevitably you will be teaching both what you know and what you don’t know too. Honesty is usually the best policy. Tell the class when you won’t have all the answers. Use email to communicate after class, or have the answer ready for the next session. Luckily, from the sheer responsibility of teaching, we teachers usually learn even more than our students. In each repeat class go further into your areas of deficiency.
    - ii) *If you don’t have fiction production experience*. You can still approach the class authoritatively from a wide range of other specializations. You can run a fiction class from a background in journalism, literature, poetry, sociology, or photography, and approach making fiction as a shared endeavor with your students. It’s wise to be candid about what expertise you do and don’t bring,

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since students will find out anyway. There's nothing wrong with students and teacher sharing discovery as a form of learning. A teacher does not have to be an ultimate authority to be respected and liked by his or her students. Especially if you are young, being a senior colleague to your students is an effective stance from which to teach. Organizing, goal-setting, and coordinating are all invaluable leadership activities. Your seriousness, commitment, and drive will be most important.

- 5) **What do I need from teaching?** To teach only what you know leads to dull classes that reek of repetition. You need to break new ground if you are to sustain your enthusiasm and energies. What interests you, as a filmmaker and as a teacher, should affect how you use this book, which allows many kinds of approach. Going into new territory renews you and makes you a more exciting teacher.
  
- 6) **What does my institution expect of its students?** These may come from school traditions or top leadership, or they may come locally from a dean or department chair. There are two main kinds of expectation, neither of which are likely to change:
  - a) Some departments or institutions must justify their funding by turning out prizewinners and pride themselves on admitting only "talented" students. However, those who are socially adroit or good at academics aren't necessarily going to succeed. Filmmaking takes persistence and long-term learning ability and these don't necessarily register in admissions tests or academic records.
  - b) Others (and I trust your institution is among these) are more inclusive and try to administer a good overall education to all their students. Despite such egalitarianism, stars still arise. Usually few people begrudge them their achievements.
  
- 7) **What support will I need?** The trend is toward making fiction on a low budget using digital technology, and to have fewer people in a unit with a range of skills. The ideal training for filmmakers is anyway holistic, and everyone becomes a better filmmaker because of it. In the technical area they will need:
  - a) *Acting*. Ideally this is taught by a trained acting teacher, but often one has to do the best one can. Take some acting classes if you haven't before; this will teach you humility because acting well takes a lot of knowledge and discipline. This edition of *Directing* has a great deal more to help student and teacher alike.
  - b) *Video theory and practice*. The basics about video such as frame rates, interlace, digital versus analog recording, luminance, chrominance, time code, drop frame and non-drop frame, etc. A lot of this theory applies easily to film, for those who are moving to cinematography. Many good manuals cover this material.
  - c) *Sound theory and practice*. Sound is the Cinderella of filmmaking, and unless you are lucky enough to be teaching musicians, your students will mostly have poor listening abilities. Your students will learn most through analytic work on film sound tracks and from conducting microphone experiments. Recording well

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- means understanding sound theory, microphones, and their pickup patterns, and learning to hear the difference. Sitting in on a film mix will teach a lot too.
- d) *Camera and sound operating practice.* There are many exercises through which to develop this, each with a set of assessment criteria to help you and your students make judgments and dig into the reasons why a particular technique does or doesn't work. See also my *Directing the Documentary* (Focal Press) for additional sound and camera exercises.
  - e) *Editing software and editing in practice.* Most students' ability to produce professional-looking editing is nothing short of astonishing. Your class or your institution should have its complement of natural editors whose specialty is the software. Do not, however, cede them complete control of the aesthetics of editing—its rhythms, logic, moods, and narrative function. Those remain very much your business. Where students are much less at home is in researching and proposing a film, and then, once their material is shot, in producing a compact, interestingly-sequenced narrative. Gaining an understanding of human perceptual processes and of traditional dramatic theory (both of which the book returns to often) will work wonders.
- 8) **How much can I expect to teach my students?** How much they can absorb depends on whether it is a residential school, how often classes meet, how long they last, and the length of the school term. Most classes run 2–4 hours, and term lengths vary.
- a) Semester system. This is usually a 15-week term, twice a year, and often includes an optional summer semester to make what is in fact a trimester year.
  - b) Quarter system. This is a 10-week term, three times a year, and sometimes includes a fourth summer quarter as well.
  - c) Periodic meetings versus an immersion course. Where a filmmaking course is part of a liberal education, students may be taking 2, 3, or 4 other concurrent courses that compete for their time and attention.
- Immersion courses are less usual.
- i) Long immersion courses are good because students can concentrate on the one subject with minimal distractions. In a national film school, for instance, students will take a set of core cinema courses and then concentrate on one of the crafts alone. Immersion learning helps students concentrate by excluding the outside world, but fatigue and pressure preclude contemplating as they learn. Occasionally students experience such pressure that the class can turn into a dysfunctional family.
  - ii) Short immersion courses are popular (and hard to find) as a form of further education. Older students, often unable to leave jobs and families for long, like them. You can cover a lot of ground in a two-week crash course of 8–10 hour days, but the pace is exhausting for students and teacher alike. The shortest course that included production in which I felt I was teaching effectively was a 2-week course meeting 4 hours a day for 10 sessions. You usually need a co-teacher. Students shoot over the weekend and edit at night during the second week. During the last week fatigue is a problem for everyone.

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During acting classes, fatigue is a problem because students are using unfamiliar skills and are very self-aware. Try to vary the diet and pace to refresh their energies. Keep them physically busy and I suggest keeping lectures to a minimum. You can combine improv with shooting, so people are learning on several fronts simultaneously.

- 9) **What work should I expect students to do in class and what outside?** Some work (such as lighting experiments) is best done as a large group; other work can only be done in small production groups or even as individuals. As a general guide:
- a) In class:
    - i) Viewing films and discussing their attributes.
    - ii) Anything that develops common knowledge or standards, such as hardware instruction, lighting, camera handling and movements, composition, pitching stories or critiquing each other's work.
  - b) Outside class, anything concerning,
    - i) Research (which you review and critique).
    - ii) Production (its outcome shows on the screen, and all its faults and virtues are evident in a dailies viewing).
    - iii) Editing of group or individual projects, which usually proceed at inconsistent speeds. More affluent students may have their own editing rig, and no longer need long hours of editing on scarce school equipment. Everybody benefits.
- 10) **What preparation should I do for each class?** Because each class develops its own rhythms and dynamics, planning in too much detail or too far ahead may be counterproductive. Instead make an overall outline, then, before each upcoming class, make a brief list of the issues you want to cover, and a list of questions that will get your class there. Having this in hand will liberate you to watch and listen. That allows you to work off the energies and issues arising in the moment. Every question you pose invites students to problem-solve, and while they ponder, you have moments in which to look ahead. Students are energized when they feel they are making the direction and pacing of each class, but it's wise to prepare to cover more ground than time will allow. Students like a detailed syllabus and they expect you to fulfill it week by week. Having a set path, yet elements of freedom while completing each step, requires an alert performance from you, the teacher. Also recommended:
- a) Pose questions to the class as a whole so it engages everybody in thought. After students have a few moments to think, nominate someone to answer. I spin a pen like a lottery pointer, and spin again if it lands on anyone who has just answered.
  - b) If you have time, select anyone who appears to be struggling a little, and encourage this student to reason his or her way through the issues. To let students opt out can reward indolence or fail to challenge shyness, so a little pressure to fabricate an answer on the spot is often good. So much about filmmaking requires thinking on your feet that expecting students to rise to any challenge is the responsible thing to do.

- c) Pick on the withdrawn or work-shy to answer more often, until they engage with the work or the social challenges, and pick up speed. Be encouraging, not punitive about this. Explain that the film industry is a tough taskmaster, and that you want them to succeed. They may grumble but will eventually thank you for it.
- d) Let winners answer questions when you are running out of time and must cover the ground on the double.

- 11) **What equipment will I need?** This may pivot on what the students themselves may own, which you can't always ascertain in advance. If you have a class of 15 students (the maximum size in which to see everybody's work and give everybody adequate attention) you will need the following:
- a) *Projection.* You will need a DVD player and either a large monitor or video projector. Sound should be played through a hi-fi and speakers, not the TV monitor's speaker, which is always a poor alternative. A video projector and hi-fi treats the material as cinema while a monitor makes it "television." Students know there's a world of difference.
  - b) *Cameras per class.* Depending on how many projects you set and how many students have their own camcorders, I suggest three DV camcorders minimum per class of 15. Having too few camcorders may limit the type of projects you can allow.
  - c) *Editing rigs per class.* Likewise, depending on how many projects and how many students own computers equipped for editing, I suggest 3 editing rigs available 12–15 hours a day, available 5 or better 7 days a week. Conserve on editing time by requiring that students view and organize their material at home in advance of editing. This speeds up the process.
  - d) *Classroom.* The classroom can be any space large enough to hold a table around which the class can sit, plus space for the monitor or projection screen, the stereo system and speakers, and a board you can write on. There should be shades for the windows. If you have no table, sit students in a circle, never in the institutional bus formation. I hate teaching in a viewing theater because the teacher becomes Authority and students cannot see each other's faces. This is contrary to the collaborative spirit of filmmaking.

12) **How can I grade the elements of fiction work?** Giving grades to expressive work, especially to a genre with so many interconnecting aspects, can be a quagmire. Educators used to concentrate on what they wanted to put *into* students, but the trend now is toward defining objectives that students can demonstrate in their work as *outcomes*. *Directing* supplies outcomes assessment forms (see Assessment Forms, under Projects, on the companion website) with an explanation of how to use them. Make it clear that scores are subjective and that you encourage them to score each other's work. Classroom discussion can range beyond basic matters of technique and equipment and consider the real purpose of the cinema—to say something about contemporary life.

13) **How can I build a syllabus?** Choose the learning objectives that you'd like to use, and the projects that deliver them. Lay these on a timeline. Postproduction, for instance, from: *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics* fifth edition

can overlap preparation for the next shoot. Now fill in the gaps with viewings, lectures, demonstrations of equipment, and so on. In no time you'll have a really packed syllabus. Don't forget screening time for projects, portions of dailies, and example films. Now show your day-by-day syllabus to a knowledgeable colleague, who will probably see things you didn't. A true directing course would probably last two years with each student directing perhaps ten projects. Few schools outside those that are highly specialized can ever do more than cover a few of the necessities and then let their students take their chances in the world. *Directing* emphasizes how necessary it will be to have a craft specialty to earn one's bread and butter while continuing to prepare as a director.

14) **What should I tell students about their chances in the film industry?** Have them read PART 1 (esp. Chapter 2) and discuss it in class. Encourage them to set career goals and to set benchmarks through their schooling as reality-checks to help in their navigation. Emphasize the degree to which their lives have been directed thus far by stick and carrot educational frameworks, and that the only expectations they will have acting for them when they leave school will be those they make for themselves. The time to start implementing the change toward entrepreneurship is in film school.