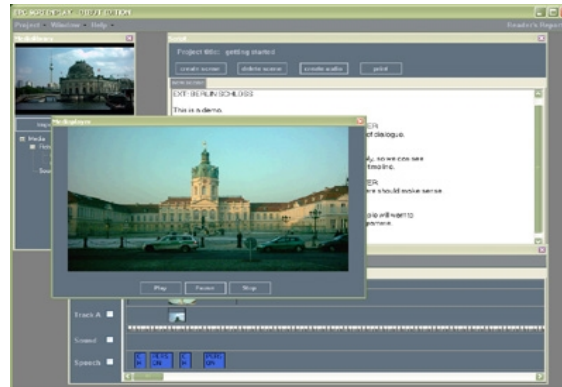


# **BPC-SCREENPLAY**

## **TEACHING NOTES.**



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**Online user guide, image library, downloads and forums: [www.bpc.screenplay.com](http://www.bpc.screenplay.com)**

## **1. Introduction.**

BPC-Screenplay is a programme for scriptwriting and early stage media project development.

Unlike a text only script, BPC-Screenplay enables the writer to work with their dialogue as audio, add images to that dialogue on a timeline, keep detailed notes and to play the movie project as it develops from version to version. BPC-Screenplay is both a 'playground' and a programme enabling highly structured project development and analysis for many kinds of films and tv programmes.

The programme gives a unique insight into the balance and rhythm of the movie as it is developed, both within particular scenes and sequences, and across the project as a whole – a much more flexible tool than traditional written scripts. Importantly, BPC-Screenplay allows the writer to reveal ideas for sequences in their movie, which emphasise action, atmosphere, or mood, yet include little or no dialogue. A key feature of the programme is to allow project assessment, by producers, script-editors, or tutors and teachers in education. The programme can also be used to demonstrate different elements of movie aesthetics.

The programme has four main working areas:

- a script window where the script can be written and printed out
- a media library for visuals and additional audio, with the associated Image Library.
- the timeline and player, where the dialogue is presented as audio and images are added.
- detail windows for notes on each scene, characters, locations.

In education, BPC-Screenplay can contribute to teachers' and tutors' work in 'Media Literacy', 'Drama', 'Storytelling and Creative Writing', 'Fictional and Factual Productions', 'Developing Programme Formats', 'Co-ordinating images and sound', 'Group and Individual Project Development' as well as 'Storyboarding for Animation' and compiling research.

BPC-Screenplay will enable students to work coherently and creatively on many more projects than can be realised in a production based approach.

Whether working individually, or in groups, students can build a portfolio of their projects, which can include all their ideas, outlines and drafts, developed concepts, as well as the completed

projects, which may, or may not, have gone forward into production. This enables the tutor to maintain a complete record of the student's development as their studies progress.

BPC-Screenplay was originally developed by the Berlin Picture Company, as a tool for the early stage development of films and tv programmes, allowing professional writers and directors to show exactly what they intend their movie to be like in ways that cannot be revealed in traditional scripts. The concept also grew from our work on 'production training' and 'digital drama' at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

Many more scripts are written and ideas developed than ever go into production and BPC-Screenplay ensures that projects in development and their key qualities are saved for the future. Project Development is potentially an interesting and exciting, if somewhat chaotic career path, which in addition to scriptwriters, includes agents and agencies, producers, script readers, script editors, commissioning editors and many layers of management in production companies, tv-stations, film studios and cultural subsidy organisations - indeed everyone who is involved in the creative and decision making process about which films and programmes will be made, before pre-production planning begins.

The Media Industries devote a lot of time and resources to developing new ideas for films and programmes, working not only with new ideas, but assessing the context of productions and the resources needed to bring them to fruition. Because of the risk that projects will not be successful there is a tendency for producers to push responsibility for development onto the backs of writers and writer-directors, but experimentation and innovation are at the heart of creative development and without that creative 'risk-taking' input, nothing exciting, or innovative will result. Among the greatest imponderables derive from the limitations of the traditional script and the elements of uncertainty within them.

Funds available to producers from the European Union, via the Media Programme and many national and regional subsidy organisations, help offset these risks, but aspirants should always be aware that for all kinds of reasons many of their projects will stall before reaching production. The organisation of scripting, research and development varies enormously from organisation to organisation and is somewhat outside the established 'work-flows' for media production. Partly this is because early stage development involves relatively few individuals per project. Equally, the

digitalisation of media has concentrated on specific technical tasks in production, post-production and dissemination and this 'digital workflow' has not sought to reach early stage development. Almost every production organisation has their own approach to project development, a fragmented approach to the tasks of development that mask the central role of writers and writer-directors across the media. If there was a foolproof method to predict which projects would be successful, then the industry would have long since adopted it.

BPC-Screenplay has been conceived to extend the range and precision of writers' contribution to the development process and to aid the process of consultation and debate about what happens to project proposals – quite simple to help find answers to two key questions: 'Are we going to make this, or not?' and 'If we are, what do we need to change?'

Working with BPC-Screenplay is more than a convenient tool for young people, it is a point of introduction to a vital and intensely creative sector within the Media Industries. A portfolio of well developed projects should enable potential employers to appreciate the talents of young people.

The following classroom notes are presented as guidelines for teachers and tutors preparing courses and classes within the framework of the UK's 'National Curriculum' in KEY STAGES 3 & 4 including the fields of Art & Design, ICT, English, Drama and the 'Creative and Media Diploma' for 14-19 year olds. Younger school-children may also enjoy the programme.

Before working with BPC-Screenplay in the classroom, we recommend that teachers and tutors should spend a couple of hours exploring the programme, familiarising themselves with the various tools and anticipating student questions, also giving some thought how best to name projects and images, then ensuring the computers on which the programme will be installed have been updated and have sufficient working space for the projects that will be created.

The Berlin Picture Company welcomes feedback about the way BPC-Screenplay is used and how it can be improved. We would also like to encourage a debate between teachers and tutors. The Forum at [www.bpc-screenplay.com](http://www.bpc-screenplay.com) has been created for this. News about the programme's development will also be posted there. In particular, we hope that students and school-pupils will use the Forum as a place to discuss their own and other schools' projects. Your feedback will help us develop these notes, which will be available online and to incorporate new features within the programme itself.

## **2. CREATIVE STARTING POINTS.**

The four main working areas of BPC-Screenplay can each be used as the starting point for project development, depending on the character of the project, the areas of emphasis and the user's skills, preferences and talents. The choices could be adopted for whole projects, or be considered as the best way to approach particular scenes, or sequences.

### Prioritising Dialogue.

Dialogue is the backbone of many kinds of production, whether for cinema or television. Working on the interplay of characters and action through dialogue in the SCRIPT WINDOW, provides a clear framework for the project's development, whether starting by creating a treatment, or building dialogue from the outset.

### Prioritising Action.

Dialogue associated with action sequences is often minimal. To create action sequences begin building the TIMELINE visuals once a scene has been created. The dialogue can then be added to the SCRIPT WINDOW and audio created, once the visual context has been established.

### Prioritising Research.

Documentaries and any kind of factual production begin with research, before a script can be formulated. Begin written work in the DETAIL WINDOW, once a project has been created and name the scenes according to the subjects being addressed. Also create a folder in the IMAGE LIBRARY for visual documentation. When the research activities are under way, this provides a resource for the creation of treatments, sequences and scenes in the script window and on the timeline.

### Prioritising Images.

Animation projects can use BPC-Screenplay as a storyboarding tool, first adding visuals to the IMAGE LIBRARY, then importing them into projects using the MEDIA LIBRARY before working with the TIMELINE and SCRIPT WINDOW to bring audio and dynamism to the project.

### Prioritising Formats and Events.

Programme formats are often defined by very specific durations, for title sequences, advertising breaks and the pattern of story development, in addition to graphics and established styles.

Where the information is available, use these known expectations about production timing to give each scene, or sequence, a specific duration by creating a mute .wav file and placing this on the TIMELINE track 'sound'. Scenes should also be created to take the breaks for unknown material, ie commercials, trailers and other interstitials, with similar mute audio on the timeline. This way the fragmented nature of programme formats can be recognised and structured into the project from the outset.

Events can be planned as a special 'one-off' format, formulating title sequences and introductory sequences for production before the event takes place. Use still photographs to plan and review effective camera positions (include wide shot, medium and close-up from each position) for concerts, presentations, or sport. Break-down the structure of the event into planned sequences for production and to anticipate production requirements.

### **3. BUILDING A PORTFOLIO.**

A portfolio of BPC-Screenplay projects will consist of each project and the various versions of that project which have been created during development. New versions of a Project are created by saving the existing version under a new name, as each stage of development has been reached. There may be many different versions of an individual project before its final form has been established.

If a Portfolio of projects are required for individual users, this is currently the best way to create it on a memory stick, or hard disc, as each version is finished. On the new storage device, create a folder labelled 'user name/candidate number - portfolio'. Copy the relevant project .xml file, the project folder and the Image Library into the new folder. These can be found in the Screenplay folder where the programme has been installed.

This means teachers and tutors can subsequently copy the project to their own computers, add their remarks on the assessment window, save under a new name and copy this back to the new medium, ensuring privacy between teacher and student.

When projects are saved under a new name, they will always be saved in the Screenplay folder where the programme has been installed and should be copied to the Portfolio folder after saving. This is to ensure sufficient storage space is available as projects grow, when media such as memory sticks may not have sufficient capacity to store the work.

If the Portfolio is to be submitted for formal evaluation, then the Portfolio folder including the Image Library, Project XML files and Project Folders should be copied to a read only medium, such as a CD-ROM, or DVD. The evaluators will require BPC-Screenplay installed on their computers to copy and read the projects, enter their comments under the assessment window, save under a new name and copy these under such security procedures as required.

A full portfolio might encompass:

1. Classroom exercises (tutor led)
2. Programme Format examples
3. Group Projects
4. Personal Projects
5. Incomplete ideas.

#### **4. USER FAMILIARISATION AND INDUCTION - for All Groups.**

As familiarisation, we suggest that the first use of the programme should be part of a demonstration by the teacher, or tutor to remind, or introduce students to some basic elements of film form, or movie aesthetics, which the class can also build up on their own computers.

##### KEY POINTS:

- Movies are the articulation of images and sound in time.
- Some sequences are dominated by people talking, others by action, or the creation of a sense of atmosphere, mood, or emotion.
- Sequences may also be abstract - including formalist, or expressionist impressions.
- Many sequences are a mixture of all these elements and more.
- TV Programme formats and genres are conventions that are constantly changing as fashions and preferences vary.
- Audiences recognise when something new works successfully, but they are sensitive to lapses breaks in style, or other inconsistencies.

Start a Project in BPC-Screenplay and Create a Scene.

This first brief scene could be written for two characters who exchange three or four lines of dialogue each. Create audio from this dialogue and begin working on the timeline.

Using images either from the BPC-Screenplay Image Library download, or a group of images created for, or by the class, to build up the scene. Space out the dialogue on the timeline. Place a master shot on TRACK B and extend this to cover the whole scene. Note the framing, both for the 16:9 aspect ratio and details of the figures, such as positioning the eyeline. Save the project and watch this version of the scene. Then add close-ups and cutaways to TRACK A on the timeline. Respace the images and dialogue until a satisfactory structure has been established. Do not change the order of the speeches. Do not spend too much time on this rough version. This first scene should be created within 8-10 minutes. Save and watch this version of the scene.

Create a Second Scene. The second scene should have no dialogue, perhaps an exterior location of



people walking, driving through a city, or a spaceship travelling through the galaxy. Simply define location and action as usual in the script, then build the images on the timeline and add, say, 20 seconds of music. This second scene should be created within 5 minutes. Save, then view the two scenes together: 'play all'.

A third scene might demonstrate one of the classic examples of montage from Eisenstein, without creating too elaborate a scene. This scene should be created in 3 minutes.

After saving, switch the two, or three scenes, using the move scene button, then save and view again. Ask which version of the sequence is more effective.

The main features of working with BPC-Screenplay have now been covered in this demonstration. The only element omitted is the detail window, where information about the project can be noted.

The three scenes can now be compared and discussed, both aesthetically, how do the shots, music, dialogue interact, and technically, how would you shoot these scenes. A further variation would be to change the locations in the visualisation and see how that would change the sense of the scenes. The class can then be asked to work on their own scenes to see what happens. At the end of this session it can be pointed out that BPC-Screenplay lets you build your projects, before filming.

Following this introduction to BPC-Screenplay's features, the group can then be given a fuller introduction to using the programme, based on the USER GUIDE and these TEACHING NOTES, before embarking on project development.

In these notes we describe two approaches to project development for more experienced students called 'Highly Structured Development' and 'Intuitive Development'. For less experienced students there are more basic suggestions. Given the enormous differences in prior experience between students, we do not distinguish between students of different ages, rather their familiarity with production.

Before encouraging students to embark on their own projects, we recommend teachers to create a couple of projects as exercises to ensure students have understood the basic workings of the programme and the principles of working with the various working areas of BPC-Screenplay.

## **5. WORKING WITH PROJECTS.**

### **1. BPC-Screenplay with Inexperienced Students.**

#### **Inexperienced producers may well be expert viewers!**

Young people become expert readers of films and programmes of all kinds from an early age, but this one-sided aspect of media literacy is not matched by proficiencies in production and may be passive and deeply uncritical, a constraint that is even more pronounced among adults. Teachers therefore carry an extra responsibility towards inexperienced students, as they contend with established competences among their students as readers, who are probably newcomers to production.

BPC-Screenplay provides the framework for format and genre based projects, but can also be used as an open environment to discover the interaction of sounds and images - a playground.

The programme is very simple to use with a minimum of settings and options for the user to learn. The script window requires basic typing skills, some navigation, the use of drag and drop and the discipline of saving regularly. In order to keep the script window simple, several functions are controlled from the keyboard, highlight text then to copy text – control+c, to add text – control + v.

For newcomers, using BPC-Screenplay as an open playground is a non-intimidating experience. Importing images, moving them around and changing shot duration with the mouse, adding dialogue, then watching the results is a quick and straightforward way of enabling new students to play with words and pictures – as simple, yet much more dynamic, than creating a picture and story on paper. The particular strength of BPC-Screenplay at this stage is that students can work with sound and images, before undertaking time-consuming organisational and technically demanding production work, involving video cameras and lighting, performers and arranging locations.

Building on students' familiarity with films and programmes and readers, one suggested starting point for more formal project development is to work with programme formats and genre, both in their different ways an approach to categorising different kinds of production.

Formats derive from television, where they provide templates for particular types of programme. Programme formats may involve different degrees of detail, including for example specific set designs, but their main characteristic is to fill a particular slot within a schedule of programmes, where the first element to be defined is the time available and their relationship to other established features of the schedule, including interstitials of all kinds. Programme formats are also reproducible, and concepts developed as formats are regularly traded between tv stations internationally.

Formats, drawn from viewers' experience, that might be considered for classroom exercises could include:

1. TV Commercials
2. News programmes
3. TV Magazine programming
4. Telenovellas and 'Soap Opera'
5. Quiz Programmes
6. Sport Shows
7. Reality Shows
8. Drama series and serials
9. Online - You Tube, video downloads
10. Promotional Video – industry, commerce, music.
11. 'Shorts'
12. Trailers, promos, station idents and other interstitials.

'You Tube' is included in this list as a clear example of the most basic level of formatting, where submissions may not exceed a certain duration, nor a specific file size. 'You Tube' demonstrates how even limited formatting can bring a degree of structure to otherwise potentially incoherent material, yet limits the type of material to be included.

A programme format may well also fall into a particular category of 'genre'.

By contrast with formats, genres are a set of established aesthetic conventions that reveal the film, or programme is being created within the framework of a set of expectations, be they 'thrillers', 'science fiction', 'romance', or the 'westerns' that were once extremely popular. There is a wide range of popular and academic literature on genre and the theme is widely explored in manuals on scriptwriting. Because the fundamental quality of all genre is 'aesthetic', projects developed within the framework of a genre need not conform to a particular 'format'.

For 'factual programming', contrast for example, 'interview-based' and 'fly on the wall' examples of documentary.

For 'fictional projects', take a story and ask what would be required for it to be defined within a genre. A group of students might be asked to present the same story in different genres, by changing the geographic, social or historic context to fit the expectations associated with each genre. This could expose the degree to which genres, like formats, provide a contextualising framework for project development. It might also reveal whether the elements of the project setting it within a particular genre are more, or less powerful than the story, or dramatic situation being explored.

The suggestion that classes begin working with formats and genre is partly to free them to move beyond these constraints and to avoid replicating the much criticised 'copycat' culture seen in broadcasting.

Once the nature of genre and formats has been recognised, students should be freer to embark on projects driven by their own creativity!

## 2. BPC-Screenplay with more Experienced Students.

### **No Two Writers work the same way!**

Right from the outset, we have expected users to want to create and save many versions of their project. Here, we consider some different ways in which they might be structured and how this work can be approached using BPC-Screenplay.

#### Fiction & Drama.

Our first consideration is that there are two basic approaches to early stage development and that most people will fall somewhere between the two as they write their scripts. Script-writing is a very personal process and we are not suggesting there is any special advantage in a particular approach. Indeed, we would be very interested to know how people choose to work in practice.

The first approach is to follow a pre-existing framework for the movie, its characters and its narrative, perhaps adapting a novel, or short story. The main elements can be defined at the outset, then worked-up as more details and new ideas emerge. This is unavoidable for writers working for series, or adaptations. At some point that process will shift towards refining and polishing the framework that has been established towards a coherent 'first draft'. We call this 'Highly Structure Development'.

The second approach is to have a set of ideas for various scenes, situations, or themes, backed by the sense that they will hang together to become a movie. Through the process of development, the broader structure emerges. It may not be clear which of the ideas, events or characters will be most important as the script is built up and assumes a clearer form. The significance of individual characters and situations may grow, or diminish as the work progresses. We call this 'Intuitive Development'.

One common experience when building a screenplay is to discover that the initial premise, or expectation is dealt with very early in the script, or seems to 'run out' of energy and leaves the writers with the challenge of asking 'what happens next?'. The first set of concepts then provide a starting point for a piece that will follow new directions, before assuming its developed form. What

begins as a 'Highly Structured' situation slips towards 'Intuitive Development'. As in professional situations, educators should see this as an opportunity to take a project forward, rather than a limitation.

A successful project will probably be best achieved by allowing students to begin work in areas where their skills and competences are most developed, writing, drawing, photography, graphics, encouraging them either to shift towards activities where they are less able, or to work in groups, or teams with a range of complementary talents.

### HIGHLY STRUCTURED DEVELOPMENT - including series and adaptations.

The BPC-Screenplay timeline can support individual scenes which are each up to 20 minutes long. This means it is practical to block out a project in which the 'scenes' are really whole sequences or acts, as a structured treatment.

If you are trying to follow the traditional theatrical three-act structure, then set up and name a group of scenes that reflect that structure, ie Act 1 Begin, Act 1 Middle, etc, and begin to build them. This should quickly reveal whether the acts are of similar weight and the structure of the movie is balanced.

When you are ready to begin working with individual scenes, rather than longer sequences, then save the whole project itself, then save it again under a new name.

There are now two versions of the project. The first version is finished and can be used for reference, be revised, or added to a Portfolio.

In the new project, create a new scene, name and position it, then copy any relevant text and dialogue from the existing act, by highlighting the text with your mouse-cursor and using the keyboard shortcut 'ctrl + c' to copy, then paste it into the new scene using the keyboard shortcut 'ctrl + v'. Remember to add a location and to end the last dialogue sentence with an 'upper case return'.

Then work up the scene in the normal way and create audio to build the timeline animatic for the

new scene. (In the Debut Edition it is not possible to copy the timeline animatic.)

Continue this process until you have covered everything from the original breakdown, then when you are satisfied, delete the relevant 'act' scenes carried forward from the earlier project.

You will now have two completed versions for your movie, one structured in acts,(an extended treatment) and one structured in scenes.

The details should by now have accumulated to become a substantial reference resource for any-one looking at your project with BPC-SCREENPLAY.

Continue this process, creating a new version of a project, when-ever you have reached a threshold where a certain sequence, or dramatic theme has been worked up, or significant revisions are required.

In the early versions, it is probably unnecessary to build a very detailed animatic from a visual point of view. Use our quick images (these can be downloaded from the online image library), or create something similar to represent your characters in conversation, or set them against the background of a general location.

For scenes with lots of action and sketchy dialogue, of course, the timeline animatic and notes in the detail window are the main reference for your work. If you are good at drawing, this presents no problem. If you are less confident, ask a graphic designer to create a batch of standard images to work from and learn how to set these figures against your preferred backgrounds. For projects requiring exotic locations, or computer generated imaging, these early stage images can be invaluable. When revising, remember that dialogue should always be amended in the Script Window and new audio made from the Script Window to the Timeline.

In later versions, the timeline can become more important, as your animatic reveals more and more about the movie you are creating.

There are two key factors we wanted to be able to identify, when the decision to create BPC-Screenplay was made. This first was whether a script is well-balanced, with all the desired story

elements in place at the right stage in the progress of the piece and with all the attendant considerations of dramaturgie and rhythm. The second key element was to see whether the balance between main characters and secondary roles enables the viewer to understand the significance of the relationships that are intended, or to recognise the psychology, goals and motivation of the characters. This is a key goal when using BPC-Screenplay, so that when a project goes into production, many of its weaknesses have been ironed out in the development stage.

### INTUITIVE DEVELOPMENT -working with ideas and situations.

A common experience among writers is to discover the theme that was expected to become a complete movie turns out only to be the starting point for final shape of the script. Characters have the potential to develop in unexpected ways. Events and situations turn out to be building blocks, rather than the culmination of a story. What might at first have seemed to be a highly structured scenario, then becomes a series of starting points for intuitive development.

The 'Intuitive Approach' ignores the 'act by act' structure and begins simply with a sequence of scenes based on the available ideas and these are worked up with images and audio in as much detail as possible. Detailed notes about each scene, the characters and locations are built up.

This provides the first version of the project, a basis for critical evaluation.

Rather than create 'bridges' between the existing scenes, the next stage of development involves contrasting the scenes that have been created with the notes that have been made. The contrast will soon be clear and a set of questions arise.

Do the scenes convey the information, ideas and emotions described in the details?

Do the initial premises fit the dramatic outcomes?

What has been omitted and what seems irrelevant?

Have common elements emerged, which were not recognised at the outset?

This sorting process provides a way of re-ordering the project and may lead to a new starting point for development, working with the strongest elements of the material, which have been established in this first, very early version of the project. To this, we can add the simple question asked by



audiences as they watch a movie - What happens next? Proximity, even between chance encounters, sets up the potential for narrative interpretation by the audience.

As a non-linear approach to project development, where established scenes and circumstances may either be the starting point, or the outcome of situations which have yet to be developed, but have the potential to coalesce in a coherent form, working with BPC-Screenplay should reveal both the strengths and weaknesses of the project. What works? What doesn't? Where are the gaps?

Points to look out for range from the obvious, is it interesting or boring, to more subtle issues, are characters under-represented or over-represented? More importantly the various versions should tell the creative team whether their work has a distinctive character and a sustained aesthetic that will be interesting to the eventual audience

## DOCUMENTARY AND FACTUAL PRODUCTIONS.

Documentary and factual productions bring additional demands on the writer, while requiring the same attention to quality that fiction projects require.

Broadly speaking, factual programming falls into two quite different production contexts, depending on the level of expertise anticipated from the viewer. A general audience requires more background material, while a specialist audience will expect specific issues to be addressed. Some productions may require the same material to be re-presented and re-edited for use with different audiences. This is perhaps the greatest difference between productions made for broadcast, or industry and business, which should also be kept in mind for projects in education.

The second major distinction is in the editorial context, whether a production is being developed on behalf of a client as information, training or promotional material, or whether the project is defined within a journalistic framework that requires attention to 'balance', 'objectivity' and 'rights of reply'.

The central premise of any factual production is that the film, or programme-maker is responsible for everything that is included in their work and for anything that is misleading, contains errors, or has been omitted, for whatever reason.

Use the detail window to build up written information on themes, people and places using the scene, character and location sections and use the Image Library to create and co-ordinate visual documentation. If video material is already available, for example interviews, take the audio and add a still image (freeze frame to jpeg) to the timeline, then build up the relevant speech as text in the script window.

The first element that BPC-Screenplay can help address is the explanatory task of conveying complex information in the abbreviated form demanded by film, video and television, a basic task addressed in all factual production.

There are also specific technical issues within factual programming where BPC-Screenplay becomes extremely effective:

#### 1. Sequences based on Graphics.

The writer can create their own provisional groups of images as diagrams and sketches to be matched to voice over, or original audio. The advantages include the ability to see whether a graphic has any impact, either as part of a sequence, or in its own right. Does the integration of graphics enhance the flow of the production, or slow the programme down? Pacing is just as important to factual programming as it is for fiction and an explanatory sequence based on graphics and voice-over is often difficult to integrate within a programme while sustaining the pace that has been established in the earlier sequences. The first version of a graphic sequence could be built by scanning simple drawings into the Image Library, which at the outset need only be a very rough sketch. Graphics can be refined as the project progresses and it is decided exactly which of them should be created as a high level finished images.

#### 2. Archive material.

However much archive material may seem to be available about a particular place, theme, or individual, finding material appropriate for a particular project is often a very frustrating and sometimes fruitless process. Often, more expense and effort goes into discovering unusable, or redundant material, than unearthing anything pertinent. The Debut Edition does not allow the writer to work with video (capture stills instead), but is an ideal framework for writers to explore the use of still images, be they photographs, paintings, or engravings, as they might appear within the 16:9 ratio of a screened image.

## SYNOPSIS', TREATMENTS AND SCENARIOS.

Using BPC-Screenplay as a tool to 'block out' ideas and narrative to create a scenario is easy. This will also help you build a 'bible' of information about the project, including locations and characters, as well as details of individual scenes.

For us, a synopsis is normally a description of the project on one side of paper (between 250-350 words), a scenario is a longer description of the general framework of the story between 8-12 pages long, while a treatment might be between 20 and 30 pages, providing a description of the project with well-defined dramaturgie and cinematic structure.

To work on a synopsis, or treatment, start a project named with your working title and begin work in the SCRIPT WINDOW.

Create a new scene and rename it with a simple one-word tag.

Then write the first paragraph of your treatment, or synopsis as ordinary text. This is likely to contain a reference to the main characters. Details can be built up in the Detail Window. If you wish to add an audio commentary, then write this as dialogue for a character called Commentator. When you have finished the draft, create audio and save.

On the timeline, images can be added to begin building the treatment, so that the timeline can be played as a presentation. These might include research material, locations and actors.

Make a new scene for each successive paragraph of the treatment.

This way, two documents are created, one text, the other a presentation animatic in BPC-Screenplay.

The text document may be finished by using the PRINT option, and printing directly, or by highlighting the text and using ctrl + c to copy it. The text can then be pasted into a word processing programme, the dialogue elements removed and the preferred layout and font finalised before

distribution. By copying and pasting from the detail window, you can also add information about characters and locations to your document.

There are numerous situations in professional production where ideas never move beyond the treatment, or synopsis stage and many writers have dozens of ideas in this form, which for one reason or another have never been realised, but nevertheless demonstrate a rich vein of creativity. Therefore, with students, it is to be expected that over a period of time, they may create many synopsis' and treatments before moving on to develop a project that is interesting to them and convincing within the educational context.

Students should be encouraged to distinguish between synopsis', treatments and scenarios as 'working documents', which help them progress their ideas and 'presentational documents', which are aimed at describing their project for other people. As 'presentations', synopsis' are often the very last document to be written once a project is ready to be shown to other people and should be thought of as a summary for busy people attracting them to all the project's qualities and to encourage them to review a proposal more deeply.

## **6. TECHNICAL.**

Install BPC-Screenplay on all the computers to be used in the working situation and check they share the same file path. Before installing ensure that each computer has a recent update of Windows XP (or Vista) with .NET2.

A complete cinema film project will require about 1Gbyte of hard disc space and could include up to 1,000 images. The BPC-Screenplay timeline can support individual scenes which are each up to 20 minutes long and over 100 scenes per project. We recommend you start small, in particular, resizing images as 640 x 360 jpegs to avoid over-filling your storage capacity!

It will be useful to have a digital stills camera, scanner and a tablet for drawing together with a good audio programme to make additional WAV files and a graphics programme to work on JPEGs.

BPC-Screenplay projects' xml files refer to the full file pathway including the drive letter, so images should always be copied into the Image Library in the Screenplay folder before using them in a project. If projects are to be opened on a second computer, the programme and Image Library should be installed with the same file structure as the first machine.

Teachers and tutors should be very careful to ensure that their Image Library is built up in a way that enables them to view many projects. Only one Image Library is required, but this should include folders for each class, or group and sub-folders for each student and their projects. The file pathways should always be the same as those on the computers where the projects have been created.

The computer voice is the standard voice selected for Windows.

BPC-Screenplay uses xml files to structure projects, so if your project 'crashes' at any time, simply close the programme and then re-open the project, which will include all information that has been saved.

## **7. USER GUIDE AND SUPPORT.**

Details of BPC-Screenplays functions and controls can be found online under the USER GUIDE, [www.bpc.screenplay.com](http://www.bpc.screenplay.com), or opened within the programme using the 'HELP' button.

An online Forum has been created to encourage dialogue between users.

Formatted stills of different locations can be downloaded from the Image Library, which are made available for unrestricted use.

Support can be requested by email: [support@bcp-screenplay.com](mailto:support@bcp-screenplay.com)

