



Presenting: Moving Images

LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

Rats

WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Using rats figuratively, to represent humans, this video presents personal thoughts about people who live on the fringes of society.



In this work the students demonstrate:

- a clear concept, developed before set construction was started
- a sense of scale, depth and perspective in the set-up.

Communicates and develops a key idea or mood by effectively combining visual features with verbal features for an identified audience:

- A variety of animation techniques – stop frame, threads, live movement.
- Effective use of tilts, pans, and close-ups.
- Careful framing of scenes to create depth.
- Variety of camera position and angle, sometimes front-on, sometimes above.
- Some use of angles within the frame to provide interest (not all car shots have the road parallel to the frame).
- The final shot re-establishes the scene.
- The sparse narration makes very effective use of repetition of key phrases to reinforce the "outsider" message.

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

Groups had been working on poetic accounts of city life. The teacher raised the question of whether visuals would provide additional meaning.

Class members were familiar with floor-based animation but had not created a simple 3D set before. Once the final concept had been formed, the teacher thought it important to discuss the purpose of a set, before any design work was begun. She wanted them to understand that a filming set did not have to be like a real scene. It might not be seen as a whole, but did need to allow the group to animate each particular scene and shot.

Teacher-student conversations

These conversations show the students can:

- justify the selection of an important idea or mood to be communicated
- explain clearly how the visual and verbal features combine to convey the idea or mood, help achieve the purpose, and target an identified audience
- use appropriate terminology to plan for and/or explain the techniques used.

The class had just read the original "Rats" piece from one of the groups. This was before any thought was given to combining it with visual information.

Teacher: It sounds like a silly question, but how do we know this piece is about people in the city?

Class: From descriptions of the people moving about. Phrases like "ragged trousers" and "faces unshaven". "Lamp-post leaning." It says "people" in one line!

Teacher: You all have pictures of this writing in your head, so would visual images add impact?

Class: We might see if our head pictures were the same? The words already give us clear pictures.

Teacher: Is a movie of a book the same as a book?

The focus moved to how words and images can combine to make meaning:

Class: In a simple dictionary, a picture of a tree, with the word "tree" underneath is really saying the same thing. But in a picture book there might be a picture of a tree and the words might say, "Jenny was hiding behind the tree." The words give us more information. The native New Zealand tree books we used for our database investigation had scientific descriptions. The photos showed us the actual details. They both helped each other.

Teacher: I'd like each group to take some time to think about their city writing. They're all effective, but what if you were to think about combining them with visual ideas. What are some possibilities that might emerge?

The next day, groups shared what they had been thinking:

Group: We think our best idea is not to use any words about people at all. Our images would show the city, but use rats instead. The rats represent the outcast humans. Viewers would have to make the connection themselves.



Presenting: Moving Images

LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

Rats

CURRICULUM LINKS

English in the New Zealand Curriculum

Achievement Objectives

Level 5: Viewing and Presenting Functions

Viewing: Reading visual and dramatic texts, including static and moving images, students should respond to and discuss various meanings, ideas, and effects, describing how verbal and visual effects are combined for different purposes.

Presenting: Using static and moving images, students should use and combine verbal, visual, and dramatic features to communicate information, ideas, or narrative to an identified audience.

Levels 5 and 6: Viewing and Presenting Processes

In achieving the objectives of understanding and using visual language:

Exploring Language: Students should, using appropriate terminology, describe the conventions of verbal and visual language in several genres, and use them to create particular effects.

Thinking Critically: Students should identify and analyse the effects of combining verbal and visual features in different ways for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Processing Information: Students should select and interpret information from visual texts and present it effectively, using appropriate production technologies for different purposes.

English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 40–41

NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement)

Achievement Standard AS 90059: English 1.8 Produce a media or dramatic presentation. New Zealand Qualifications Authority (2001).

Unit Standard 12418: Present a moving image using verbal and visual features. New Zealand Qualifications Authority (2003).

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move these students towards the next learning step, the teacher could encourage them to consider questions such as:

- The "rejected ones" are described, but would it be useful to go beyond description and present a point of view?
- What natural sounds could be added?

REFERENCE

Ministry of Education (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.