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<td>Author(s)</td>
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SCRIPTWRITING FOR VIDEO

BY

WAYNE LEVY

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11. SOME TIPS FOR SCRIPTWRITERS.
Planning and scriptwriting a video program is a demanding exercise, which needs strict concentration and a large amount of creativity. The scriptwriter must communicate closely with the client and video producer to try to understand exactly what they want the video program to teach or "say".

The client or trainer/subject expert will usually provide the scriptwriter and video producer with a number of ideas about the video program to be made. The scriptwriter will have to think through a number of distinct steps before any videotape is shot. The video producer will assist and advise the client. But the client/trainer should have an understanding of different video teaching techniques and video program formats which will enable a learner to successfully complete a learning video program.

After thinking about the concept and subject matter of the video program, the scriptwriter must write a TREATMENT. Remember the TREATMENT is a story composition written for yourself, about what you want your video program to teach, and includes ideas about how you "see" the completed video program.

When we write a video script for a training or teaching program we must remember to write simply for the ear and at all times think visually. The printed medium allows the reader to skim words and sentences quickly, to re-read and consolidate his thoughts, and to turn pages backwards or forwards. The typography of the printed page, chapter headings, paragraphs, and titles give the reader information to help him understand the material.

With video we must change verbal information into visual communication. The video producer and the client trainer must both become visually literate.

When the client/trainer considers a sequence of information to be imparted he should constantly address the problem of visualization. If he wants to present scientific procedure then he must consider the language of video, shot composition, the best angles of view, appropriate colour, detail to be clearly seen on the video screen and whether the viewers respond the way he wants them to.
The script should enhance the visual sequences, but not become overbearing. Sentences should be short and clear. Avoid tricky word combinations and long phrases that are difficult to say in a single breath. The words must relate to the visual, because there is nothing more distracting and confusing to the viewer than trying to relate visual and verbal sequences that present conflicting messages.

An informative and entertaining video program will not suddenly and magically appear on the video screen. Any worthwhile video program is the result of much thinking, careful planning, imagination and creative scriptwriting. The scriptwriter, who may also be the producer, director, cameraman and editor in a small production unit needs to have a variety of skills.

The scriptwriter should know the medium of video/television and know its boundaries and limitations. The scriptwriter should understand the language of film and video and understand the art of video editing. The scriptwriter will also have to establish a close working relationship with the video crew members to be able to bring a training/teaching video program to a finished form.

Let's say that a client needs a video program about Geomorphic Mapping. Firstly the video producer must discuss the project with the client/trainer.

The video producer in a small video unit may also be the scriptwriter, but if this is not so then the scriptwriter should be brought into discussions about the video program early in the planning stages. The scriptwriter and video producer must work closely together with the client/trainer.

The pre-production meetings between the client/trainer and video producer/scriptwriter should range over the whole topic. The key points of importance that need to be taught will have to be discussed, interesting visuals viewed, and the video program format agreed upon.

A variety of exterior and interior locations, special set-ups, and different subject experts may be needed for the video production. The scriptwriter thus has many details to keep in the back of his mind when scripting a video program.
2 SOME ASPECTS OF VIDEO PRODUCTION TO CONSIDER

When scripting and planning a training video program the scriptwriter in liaison with the video producer needs to consider a number of variables which may effect the budget or time frame of the video project.

ASPECTS OF VIDEO PRODUCTION

1. Talent and Casting:
Will the client or a subject expert present his own material "on-camera"?
Do we need a professional presenter or actors?
Will we have to "coach" non-actors with speaking sequences and show them how to work "on-camera"?

2. Video Personnel:
Is this video project going to use a large or small video crew.
Will we be using a full studio production crew and multiple camera set-up, or a small crew to shoot location sequences with a single Portapak camera?

3. Scriptwriting:
The script forms the basis of production and is extremely important. The scriptwriter needs to work closely with the client or subject expert and the producer if the scriptwriter is not himself the producer.

4. Narration, Commentary, Voice-over, Interviews:
The scriptwriter should have in his mind the "talking-style" of presentation.
Will we use a professional narrator to present the commentary or use the trainer or an actor.
Will the interview format with people involved in the subject of the video be used?

5. Locations:
Does the subject matter of the video involve travel to various locations or require special sequences to be shot at appropriate times of the year or day.
All the problems of location shooting need to be considered: lighting, sound, travel, crowds and people.

6. Scenery, Costumes, Make-up:
The scriptwriter will need to take particular care in 'setting' his script. Consideration will have to be
given for costumes, uniforms, make-up and any special scenery that needs to be included in the video program.

7. Props:
The client/trainer will need to tell the scriptwriter of any special technical equipment or "props" that will be needed for the video program.

8. Planning:
The scriptwriter needs to have a clear perception of the video program when planning the script.

9. Lighting:
Does the script call for any special lighting techniques?

10. Electronic Effects:
The Special Effects Generator (SEG) will create wipes, split-screen, or dissolves etc. The video composer, using a built-in computer, can create a variety of titles and superimpose printed words over visual to reinforce learning. Mechanical effects like fog, smoke, and animation may be needed too.

11. Sound:
Does the program need live sound recorded on location and will there be any foreseeable problems with this? Will sound effects and music be added at the editing and post-production stage?

12. Permissions, Releases, Copyright of Visuals and Printed Materials:
Any materials used by the scriptwriter in the video program must be "cleared" for copyright. Talent and Subject experts should sign "releases" allowing themselves to be used in the video program. Any visuals like film and video sequences from other sources will need copyright clearance or payment for their use. This also applies to printed materials like maps and survey reports. Illustrations in TVI workbooks will need permission for use as "educational materials".

13. Titles:
The scriptwriter will use a number of titles in the script. These will need to be drawn by artists. Time to accomplish special illustrations must be allowed. Titles
can be created directly on to videotape through a video image composer. Titles will include the client's logo, the title of the program, "words" or "phrases" for superimposition over visuals and the list of credits.

14. Credits:

The scriptwriter must ensure that all personnel involved in the video production are given due recognition. The talent, crew, subject expert and organisations that have given assistance to the project must be described.

15. Budget:

The scriptwriter very early on must be told of any budget constraints. travel, overnight accommodation and food, hiring of talent and equipment must be discussed.

The job of scriptwriting needs a person with a broad general knowledge, a wide variety of interests, well read, and able to communicate with a range of personnel from the client, video producer, cameraman and talent to the learners who will eventually watch the video program.

The scriptwriter must not only be proficient at writing down words on paper, but also at understanding the concept of the video program in his minds-eye. This ability to "see" the finished video program is the technique of "conceptualisation". The technique and artistic ability of the scriptwriter to take a technical, academic or artistic subject and with imagination make it exciting to the viewer and student is the part of the craft of scriptwriting.
After discussion with the client, the scriptwriter should emerge with a very clear idea of what the video program is about. The scriptwriter must convert the client’s ideas and information into his own concept. The scriptwriter will work closely with the client or subject expert, but must be careful that the client does not make the video program too detailed.

A series of short programs, perhaps 5 to 10 minutes long, is much better than an hour long program that attempts to include too much information. The idea of "single-concept" video programs should be considered.

Do not try to tell or teach everything in a single program. Be concise and stimulating. Then the viewers will want more! The scriptwriter and the video producer are in the business of communicating with people, so they must understand how people learn and how we can stimulate people to research, explore and learn about the world around them.

MODEL FOR SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

IDEA
The subject of the TVI video program.
Define what the video program is about.

CONCEPT
A general notion of how the TVI video program will develop.
The key points must be outlined and the objectives stated.

RESEARCH
A print and visuals search.
Interviews and discussions.

SCRIPTWRITING
The Treatment script.
The Non-script.
The Storyboard.
The first thing the scriptwriter must do in developing his script is write down a set of Instructional Objectives for the proposed video program. Objectives need to be specific and goal oriented. Objectives are the purpose or goals of the intended video program. Objectives state the facts that need to be imparted by the instructor.

The objectives of an intended video program are most important for the client and scriptwriter to articulate. It forces them to begin thinking with a clear idea of what this particular video program is attempting to teach.

Because these objectives are related to the human behavior of the learners they are referred to as Instructional Objectives. It is usual educational practice to give trainees a test before and after the video program, to find out if these Instructional Objectives have been achieved.

Instructional Objectives make the subject expert and the scriptwriter concentrate on the expectations of the intended video program. This is imperative. Many training programs fail because the Client and Instructor forgets that the learner is the important hub of the learning process. The Instructor or video presenter is merely the facilitator of the learning process. The scriptwriter should keep this foremost in his mind.

An Instructional Objective is a statement of what the learner will be able to do when he has successfully completed the learning experience or training video program. What is it that the video program must teach? This is the major question that must be answered by the client and scriptwriter at the beginning of the planning process. Also the question of HOW will we know when we have taught it, and by WHAT methods and materials will work best in the teaching situation. So by defining a set of Instructional Objectives we focus our "intent" in describing a proposed change in the learner.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. Define what is expected of the learner.
2. Provide an instructional guidepath for the video program.
3. Help to orient the video program to the learners needs.

4. Assist the producer to select the appropriate video program format.

5. Assist the producer to organise learning sequences.

6. Enable the instructor to measure the effectiveness of the video program.

Experience has shown that when a script is proving difficult to write, the chance are that the problem lies in the classification of the Instructional Objectives. Before the scriptwriter begins writing, a statement of the Instructional Objectives must be made in a clear and concise manner.

A clear definition of Instructional Objectives will usually indicate to the scriptwriter, not only what should be included in the video program, but indicate which video format (training video, documentary, interview, news, narrative, lecture or panel discussion) the subject will be best presented.

The instructor and scriptwriter must not make the Instructional Objectives too complex by combining several behavioral objectives into a single objective. Another error to be avoided is making the objectives say what the instructor should do, rather than the learner. And of course Tests and Validation should be conducted at the conclusion of the video program to make sure that the objectives have been fullfilled.

For a video program about GEOMORPHIC MAPPING the scriptwriter should make a list of Instructional Objectives, which might look something like this:

**Geomorph Mapping : Instructional Objectives**

1. What is the purpose of this video program:
   - Introduce Geomorphic Mapping techniques to Cartographers.
   - Show examples of Geomorphic Maps.

2. What facts need to be imparted: Geomorphic Mapping is essential for Land Evaluation Systems.
   - Geomorphic Mapping outlines Land suitability.
   - Geomorphic Mapping is essential for
Planning roads, towns and other development.

3. What do we want the Video Program to Teach:
That Geomorphic Mapping assists predictions of similar areas and assists the geographer to extrapolate information.

So, with a list of Instructional Objectives, what does the scriptwriter do next? Now comes the hard part. The scriptwriter must put pen to paper and start to prepare the script. He does this by first writing a Rough Draft and then a Treatment.
MODEL FOR SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

IDEA
The subject of the TV1 video program.
Define what the video program is about.

CONCEPT
A general notion of how the TV1 video program will develop.
The key points must be outlined and the objectives stated.

RESEARCH
A print and visual search.
Interviews and discussions.

SCRIPTWRITING
Rough Outline
The Treatment script.
The Outline script.
The Storyboard.
ROUGH OUTLINE

First the scriptwriter drafts a rough outline, which may just be scribbled on paper. Any ideas and discussions, Instructional Objectives, plans, visuals which may be used in the video program are jotted down.

THE TREATMENT

Then a TREATMENT of the way in which the scriptwriter intends to approach the subject has to be written. There may be a number of draft treatments, so don't think the first treatment you write will be the finished article.

The TREATMENT is a story or composition written by the scriptwriter for himself. It forces the scriptwriter to write down HOW he 'sees' the completed video program. The story outlines what you want the video program to teach and includes ideas and thoughts about the completed program.

Books and reports allow the reader to skim words and sentences quickly, to re-read and consolidate his thoughts, and to turn pages backwards or forwards. The typography of the printed page, chapter headings, paragraphs, and titles give the reader information to help him understand the material.

When we write a video script we are writing mainly for the ears and eyes. Therefore, with video we must change verbal information into visual communication. The scriptwriter must become visually literate. He must write a script that instructs the viewers by visuals, more so than by detailed commentary.

After the Treatment has been written the scriptwriter and client will need to sit down together and criticise it. Comments give the scriptwriter and subject expert time to add or subtract detailed information, and to appraise and ponder the video project.
At this stage it is wise to discuss any points of difference between the scriptwriter/producer and the client/trainer. Any confusion of terminology and argument about specific visual ideas need to be resolved.

The fact that the scriptwriter has put his thoughts and ideas down on paper in writing the Treatment will crystallise ideas and focus attention on the concept of the video program. The scriptwriter at this stage steers himself through four processes.

Once the client/trainer and the scriptwriter are happy with the first draft Treatment, the process of refinement and alteration of the Treatment begins. Writing is hard work. There is not just one Treatment, but rather a series of versions that may run from draft one to draft four. So firstly to begin writing the Treatment the scriptwriter researches the subject. He does this by questioning and talking to the trainer/subject expert, by reading books and articles on the subject matter and by using reference books, like encyclopedias and technical manuals.
can be created directly on to videotape through a video image composer. Titles will include the client’s logo, the title of the program, "words" or "phrases" for superimposition over visuals and the list of credits.

14. Credits:

The scriptwriter must ensure that all personnel involved in the video production are given due recognition. The talent, crew, subject expert and organisations that have given assistance to the project must be described.

15. Budget:

The scriptwriter very early on must be told of any budget constraints. Travel, overnight accommodation and food, hiring of talent and equipment must be discussed.

The job of scriptwriting needs a person with a broad general knowledge, a wide variety of interests, well read, and able to communicate with a range of personnel from the client, video producer, cameraman and talent to the learners who will eventually watch the video program.

The scriptwriter must not only be proficient at writing down words on paper, but also at understanding the concept of the video program in his minds-eye. This ability to "see" the finished video program is the technique of "conceptualisation". The technique and artistic ability of the scriptwriter to take a technical, academic or artistic subject and with imagination make it exciting to the viewer and student is the part of the craft of scriptwriting.
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<th>Geomorphic Mapping</th>
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<td>2. Instruct how Geomorphic Mapping can be used.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target Audience:</td>
<td>Physical Planners working in provincial centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment:</td>
<td>The video program will teach Physical Planners how Geomorphic Mapping can be of use to their planning needs. The video program will begin by showing Geomorphic Mapping being used in a computer laboratory. We will try to show the relationship between the computer generated information and relate this to the actual territory being studied. The interaction between Geomorphic Mapping and remote sensing GIS techniques will be addressed.</td>
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**THE NOTE-SCRIPT**

When the TREATMENT of the training video program has been completed by the scriptwriter, he takes the composition or essay-like Treatment and cuts it down into note form. This may seem silly, but it makes the scriptwriter think in a series of visual sequences. This is called the NOTE-SCRIPT.

The NOTE-SCRIPT is a long list of single sentences in chronological order of the video program. This may run into a few pages of double space sentences. It enables the scriptwriter and client/subject expert to quickly run their eyes over the outline.
of the video program to ascertain if any important elements have been left out. The scriptwriter will at this stage be thinking imaginatively and always considering what visuals might be used in the video program.

Watch closely for relationships between images and sequences. Try to visually link video sequences so that the editor can 'cut for continuity'. Look at any other previously made video programs or films on the same subject. Do not copy them of course, but explore their concept and see how another team have approached the subject. The NOTE-SCRIPT is a concise way in which to appraise your approach to the subject.

THE STORYBOARD

Many people cannot visualise a video program from merely reading a TREATMENT or NOTE-SCRIPT so now it is important for the scriptwriter to help the client/subject expert and other people involved with the production to 'see' what may well be the finished video program.

The STORYBOARD is a comic strip format with small pictures drawn down the left hand side of the page. Under the drawings or shots are written the types of shots to be used, such as close-up, medium shot, long-shot, pan, dolly etc. This is using the language of film and video. On the right hand side of the drawings the commentary or narration for each shot or sequence is written.

Not all video and film producers work like this. Some video producers, at this point, go straight from the note-script to a 'Professional Script'. Technical and training video programs should usually be "Story-boarded". Moreover, if the great filmmakers Walt Disney, Alfred Hitchcock and Steven Spielberg storyboard their productions to help them "see" a program before any shooting commences then I feel it must be a good idea which we can safely follow as a reliable planning method.

When the scriptwriter and client/subject expert consider a sequence of information they want to talk about, they should also think of the visualisation. If they need to show a scientific procedure the best viewing angles, shot composition, language of video, colour, detail to be clearly seen on the video screen and the way the viewers will respond all need to be considered.
The written script and the spoken commentary should enhance the visual sequences and not become overbearing. Sentences should be short and clear. Avoid tricky word combinations and long phrases that are difficult to say in a single breath.

The words must relate to the visuals, as there is nothing more distracting and confusing to the viewer than trying to relate visual and verbal information that shows conflicting messages.

The storyboard script clearly lets all personnel involved in the video production see the visuals and commentary side by side in a clear form.

The video producer/director and crew can use the storyboard for planning and shooting. Some video producers change the storyboard script into a professional script format, but this is a matter of personal choice.
THE FOUR PROCESSES OF SCRIPTWRITING

1. Reflection
   On the concept of the video program.

2. Research
   Print and visuals search.

3. Analysis
   Of the problems to be taught.

4. Discussion
   With video director and instructor.
RESEARCH

Let's take some time to think back over the scriptwriters craft. It is a job which, although very creative, must be done in a methodical manner and not rushed! The scriptwriter must remember that he will not have all the relevant information about a video program, so research must be done by reading books and talking to the client.

The background information is slowly built-up in a logical manner. The scriptwriter must define the topic to himself. Use a dictionary to understand technical words or approach the client/subject expert to assist with explanations. Read manuals and papers about the subject. Go to the Encyclopedia Britannica and see what it says about the subject you are writing about.

Talk to people other than the client/subject expert, involved with the subject and visit the locations where they work and see what they actually do! In fact four distinct areas of research need to be carried out: Print, Visual, Interview and Field Location research.

RESEARCH SCHEMA

PRINT RESEARCH
Books, Encyclopedias & Illustrative material.

VISUAL RESEARCH
Film, Video, Graphics, Photography.

INTERVIEW RESEARCH
Interviews and Discussion.

FIELD AND LOCATION RESEARCH
Reconnaissance and Excursions.
After the background information for the video program has been built-up, it should be typed into a word processor. The words and phrases of the ideas become sentences, sentences expand to paragraphs, cut and paste, re-assemble and print!

Once again we read this draft, cross-out, change, insert, expand paragraphs. We then make a clean copy on the word processor and "voila" we have our TREATMENT. The TREATMENT then gets cut down to a NOTE-SCRIPT and the NOTE-SCRIPT changed into a STORYBOARD or SHOOTING SCRIPT.

The background information about the TOPIC is researched by the scriptwriter, with input from the client. These become the creative IDEAS for the video program.

IDEAS become a CONCEPT for articulation and the concept becomes a discussion of KEY POINTS which must be covered in the video program.

Scriptwriting is a changing, evolutionary living series of re-writes and re-writes and re-writes! Finally the scriptwriter, as well as writing the video program script, may have to assist the client/subject expert with writing an introductory booklet or brochure to accompany the video program. This will be used by trainers and instructors using the video program.

Often the script outline is included in the video program notes, this may be written from the note-script or the whole Storyboard might be included so trainers and instructors can read and "see" what the video program is about before they use it in a class.

Also a series of workbooks or student workguides may be written for the students to use, while they are viewing the video program.

Workbooks make the students interact with their trainers and the video program and not merely become passive viewers. There may well be tests included in the student workbooks. These might be quizzes on the video program, like fill in the blank, True/False, multiple choice or written answers. A glossary of terms definitions, maps, photographs and after illustrative material may need to be included.
2. THE TARGET AUDIENCE

1. Know the Audience.

The scriptwriter will need to be told who the Target Audience are, and whether they are new to the subject matter or have prior knowledge. The scriptwriter may need to know their educational backgrounds and perhaps the subject expert will administer a test to gauge their ENTRY LEVEL.

2. Instruct the Audience.

The purpose of the training video program is to instruct. The scriptwriter will work closely with the client/subject expert, and may even talk to technical advisors, information experts and project consultants. The scriptwriter will ask many questions, because in a way he has to be taught about the subject before he can write the script. Scriptwriters should not be afraid to say to a client, "I don't understand what you mean! Please explain this in more detail".

3. Entertain the Audience:

Training, educational and information video programs, as well as teaching facts and operational details, should also entertain. A little humor can lift a flat factual presentation. Remember at all times that the medium of video is visual, so don't let the subject expert bog down your script with too much detailed verbal information. The scriptwriter and video producer must retain program control, because it is they who understand the medium of video, usually not the client.

4. Retain Audience Interest:

To keep our audience and viewers watching our video program we have a variety of special electronic effects like titles, superimpositions, split screen, animated sequences etc. all which should be integrated by the scriptwriter who must frame the subject matter or message within the confines of the electronic media. The scriptwriter must have an eye for visuals, composition, light, color and use of graphics and illustrations. A little humor, asking questions, and getting the audience to do some writing in their video workbooks, are teaching techniques that may be used.
5. Engage the Audience:

An audience that just sits and looks at a video/television monitor does not retain much information. The audience must interact with the training video program by being asked questions, which may be answered on worksheets or completing work in a video workbook. The trainer presenting the video program must inform the learners that there will be discussion at the conclusion of the video program. Knowing that they are expected to do something, stimulates learning and engages the audience with tasks to be done.

THE AUDIENCE MODEL

THE AUDIENCE

- Know the Audience
- Instruct the Audience
- Entertain the Audience
- Retain Audience Interest
- Engage the Audience in Some Instructional Exercises

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9. THE QUALITIES OF A SCRIPTWRITER:

We might ask ourselves what makes a scriptwriter. I have already said that a scriptwriter should be an educated person with a broad general knowledge and an interest in the world about him.

All scriptwriters should be magpies! The magpie is a bird that sometimes collects items of interest that he spies. It may be a colorful trinket fallen in the grass or some blue or red underwear hanging out to dry on a clothes-line.

The serious scriptwriter should keep a 'clipping file' of press-notes and articles, magazine stories, brochures, pamphlets, graphs and illustrative material. He should be a wide reader of books, scripts and magazines to glean ideas. The scriptwriter should have contact with other people working in the video/television medium.

The client and video producer will have to realise that scriptwriters work in many strange ways. Scriptwriting is a very creative activity and one's brain seldom works in a neat orderly manner. The raw material of the script, the ideas and research, must stew and bubble away for a while before they effervesce and sort themselves into a meaningful concept.

Sometimes the scriptwriter may be seen, walking around the grounds, walking the dog, browsing in a library or amongst a friends' collection of books, simply staring out of the office window, seemingly asleep at his desk, watching other video programs based around the subject he is exploring or while away the time nibbling satays, pappadums and drinking tea or coffee.

The scriptwriter needs time to sort his jumbled thoughts. But there comes a time when pen must be put to paper and with the objectives of the training video program clearly in mind the writing of the script has to START.

With his research findings and pre-production discussions completed, the ideas tumble out of the scriptwriters mind. He is up, up and away, like Superman!

The tools of the scriptwriter are basically pens and paper. Some scriptwriters prefer to draft out words on paper, while other writers can work
directly on to a typewriter or word processor. Like the artist who uses light, color, mass, line, form, rhythm, perspective and composition, the scriptwriter during the Treatment stage uses words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs, headings and sub-headings to consolidate his script.

Sometimes ideas will not come along easily, so the scriptwriter should take a short break, but if you can discipline yourself to work to a timetable, more the better! Writing is hard work! To write a few pages of 2,000 to 3,000 words of Treatment is no easy task!

A script is written by plain hard work and perseverance. A script does not suddenly leap onto the page in a finished state. Firstly we work on the ideas as discussed with the client/subject expert and video producer. The scriptwriter scribbles notes to assist his memory.

The second stage is taking the scribbled notes and expanding them by typing or word processing the scribbled material into a coherent form:

1. WORDS become PHRASES.
2. PHRASES become SENTENCES.
3. SENTENCES expand to PARAGRAPHS.
4. PARAGRAPHS eventually become the TREATMENT.

Thirdly this Treatment may be re-assembled by the magic of the word processor or by hand with "cut-and-paste". Margin notes and changes of ideas are written over the first draft of the Treatment.

The fourth part of this sequence is to work on the changes and produce a "clean-copy". Begin visualising the pictures and sequences that you intend to use in the video program. Search for new, fresh, unusual, and imaginative ideas. Watch a lot of television and use your eyes and ears. Learn to be a good storyteller by observation. The scriptwriter must have an eye for visuals and an ear attuned to good language and dialogue and effective music. Remember video is a visual medium. We do not hear words and commentary alone, but need music and sounds, background and effects.
SCRIPT CONSTRUCTION MODEL

Words

Phrases

Sentences

Paragraphs

TREATMENT

Treatment 1.
Ideas and scribble notes.

Treatment 2.
Actual Writing.

Treatment 3.
Reassemble, cut and paste.

Treatment 4.
Clean - copy.

SCRIPT CONSTRUCTION

Topic or Theme

Ideas

The Concept of the Video

Key Points to be imparted to learners

Writing
1. Treatment
2. Notescript
3. Script
4. Storyboard
10. DISTRIBUTION OF SCRIPTS

Why do producers and scriptwriters need a script? No video production should ever be commenced without a completed script. A script is written to focus the client, video producers and the scriptwriters ideas onto the major issue of the program. It makes the planning team think through any impracticalities or impossibilities. It may be impractical to take aerial photographs of Krakatoa in the monsoon, or impossible to fly the Baksosurbanal aeroplane around Gunung Salak at a height of two metres. Scripting and planning makes the team come up with feasible and suitable ideas. Any factual errors or contradictions can be edited out of the writing at this stage.

Also the scripting and pre-planning allows the producer/scriptwriter to plan a 'budget' taking into consideration, action, events, locations and settings. He might say the scriptwriter writes the script firstly for himself to clarify his own thoughts and thinking about the video program. The producer needs the script to see that the video program is proceeding in a logical manner. The Director will need a script from which to direct the video program. The client/subject expert will need a script to make sure that his subject matter has been handled in the manner he thinks is appropriate and to make sure his messages are conveyed correctly.

The video crew will need scripts to establish in their own minds what is to be appear on the screen. It is hoped all video crew members will put forward criticisms and suggestions for improvement and changes to the script. Remember that the presenter and any actors or "non-camera" assistants will also need scripts.
II. TIPS FOR SCRIPTWRITING

Scriptwriting needs deep concentration. It cannot be accomplished in fits and starts but rather needs large slabs of time where the writer can settle down, become oblivious of the world around him, and start composing language.

It is advisable to set aside a fixed time each day and not let any other commitments disturb you. Some writers like to work early in the morning, 5 am to 6 am, others prefer to "burn the midnight oil" 9 pm to 1 am.

You need a block of uninterrupted time as long as three hours to get any serious work done, so try not to waste time when it comes to starting. This means that one must know what one is going to write. Many writers stop writing the previous day in mid-sentence!

They do this so that when they take up pen or pencil again they have a starting point. Personally I prefer not to do this as I like to complete my rush of creativity. I know I'm a slow starter, but I prefer to start slow and move into "high-gear"! When I finish writing for the day I make margin notes of what I want to say next. Remind yourself how the next paragraph will begin and when you return to your desk the next day you'll be able to resume immediately.

The scriptwriter must be properly equipped with a packet of ballpoint pens, typewriter, ribbons note-pads and reams of A4 paper. One needs a large desk on which to spread out and a comfortable chair in which to work and recline. The writer needs a good desk lamp to avoid eye-strain.

The scriptwriters' area should be cozy and comfortable so that he looks forward to working in that environment. Some writers are able to type their material directly into a word processor. This is a lucky talent to have, but I reckon most of us work best by scribbling and drafting with pen onto paper and then transposing our work to the word processor.

The tactile contact of holding a pen and working with paper is itself an aesthetic experience. People writing directly into a word processor have
to be careful of "Giga". This simply means in computer language, 'garbage in, garbage out'.

We have to make sure that our writing conforms to the concept of the video. Some scriptwriters sketch a series of visuals on catalog cards and pin these around the room and write the script to match the "storyboard" of visuals. The visuals concentrate the scriptwriters' attention to the concept of the video program.

But its a matter of taste and the scriptwriter should work in a manner that suits his style. As well as a nice environment to work in, the scriptwriter will need some other tools of the writers trade. There are a Concoise Oxford Dictionary, Roget's Thesaurus and perhaps a Cassell's Spelling Guide. The scriptwriter will need access to the Enclopyclopedia Britannica and Technical books on the subject one is scripting.

When writing for any video program we must remember we are dealing with a visual medium. Therefore our sentences for commentaries or narrations should be short. Also be careful of using long words, too many adverbs and adjectives. Rather than the commentary describe things, let the visuals do it.

Sometimes no matter what a scriptwriter does he will suffer from "writer's block"! A few techniques to overcome this despondent state are:

1. Re-read what you have written previously. This will get you thinking about the script that you are supposed to be writing.

2. Get up from your chair. More around the room to get your blood circulating.

3. Do some exercises to lessen the tension.

4. Browse through some magazines or books. Even read a comic or the "funnies" in the newspaper.

5. Listen to some of your favorite music.

6. Suck a few jubes or sweets, or if one is addicted to the habit of smoking, then have a puff!

7. Have a drink of tea or coffee or what ever is your poison.
9. Move to a completely different writing project. Forget the video script and write a letter to a friend.

9. Read your work aloud to a friend or colleague. Get some feedback and criticism.

10. Hug the person you love, or whistle to your canary.

Scriptwriting can be a most satisfying job, to see how a video program grows from an idea, through a series of writes and re-writes to the finished video program screening on the video monitor.

It can be a pleasure to see our work used by other people in training and learning. Scriptwriting is a field in which your success or failure is completely in your own hands.

A scriptwriter must use his or her intelligence, imagination and teracity to stick with the "problem" of writing the video script. Perhaps in no other field of endeavour are you in command of your own creation. You begin with a blank page of paper and video screen, and hopefully end with an entertaining and instructional video program.

When the client and the video producer have worked over the storyboard script and are in agreement on the content and most of the visuals, the video producer will re-vamp the storyboard to his own style of shooting-script.

Once this is done, the video producer is ready to begin with the video crew shooting the video program. The video producer will most probably shoot more material than is needed. This will be edited down later, or perhaps some of the extra visual material will be "logged" and used in other video programs.

Remember a good video program does not just magically happen. It is the result of imagination and planning. You must spend much time in scripting if your video is to communicate the messages that you desire. Keep a close liaison with the video producer and keep in mind when scripting the video program:
- All aspects concerning your subject matter.
- What messages are you trying to communicate.
- Define your target audience.
- Pay strict attention to scripting.
- Plan interesting and exciting visuals.
- Plan printed workbooks and manuals for learners.
- Write introductory notes for the video program, for the trainers and learners.

Once you have thought about these concepts and planned your video program, you will find, as I have already outlined, that it is essential to follow the four steps of scripting: 1. TREATMENT, 2. NOTE-SCRIPT, 3. STORYBOARD, 4. SHOOTING-SCRIPT.

Putting all these ideas down on paper gives the client/subject expert and the video producer the opportunity to organise and revise before the production begins. This is most important to alleviate hassles between people, to keep within the budget and work within a realistic time frame.