

Critical Video

Week 3

Thursday, February 13, 2020

Topic:

- What is the subject matter and why have you chosen it?

LGBTQ+ youth mental health with a concentration in mental health resources provided by educational institutions. As one of the primary social environments where youths spend their time, educational institutions such as high schools and colleges have a lot of influence over the mental health of their students. Therefore, they should be able to have significant power in addressing the highly disproportionate rate of suicide among LGBTQ+ youths.

- What is the driving question you are seeking to answer?

What should mental healthcare do in educational institutions to lower LGBTQ+ youth suicide in the United States?

- **What other media has been produced on the topic? (In your treatment, you will have to acknowledge such works and why your project is different or how it builds on or refutes such works.)**

- LEAD with Love (2011)
 - 35 minute documentary by the University of Utah about LGBTQ+ teens
- Out in suburbia : the stories of eleven lesbians (1990)
 - 29 minute documentary - "This remarkably honest and revealing documentary shatters the stereotypes held by many people unfamiliar with the gay community. Eleven women discuss with heartwarming frankness their lives in local neighborhoods, covering a wide range of issues including marriage, motherhood, discrimination, stereotypes and female roles. Out in Suburbia shows us that many lesbians have mainstream values and lead conventional lives."
- Raising Zoey
 - "This documentary follows Zoey Luna, a 13-year-old trans girl in Los Angeles. Viewers get an inside look at Zoey's family life, including interviews with her older sister and mother Ofelia who have stood behind Zoey. It chronicles many of the struggles that trans youth face, including a teacher at her school that made fun of her during class and administrators asking that she transfer. But in the end, it's a film that depicts a family's unwavering support."
- Matt Shepard Is A Friend Of Mine
 - The murder of Matthew Shepard was a watershed moment for an entire generation of gay people; a shocking and brutal reminder that homophobic violence can be enacted, without provocation, at any time. This film, by Matt's close friend Michele Josue, looks beyond

the now-famous name to paint a picture of who he was as a person, how his death affected the people who loved him, and what we can still learn from his story.

- Before Stonewall
- Paris is Burning

World and Scope:

- What is the world of your film (a household, a specific organization, a neighborhood, a country)?

Schools (high school and colleges) within the United States (although with a focus in the Northeast as they will be the easiest to access for interviews).

- What is the time span covered by your documentary (the duration of an event, a season, a life)?

The contemporary age.

- How long will the documentary be (short, feature-length, a series)?

This probably needs a series of feature-length films, but a single, succinct video will suffice.

- How big of a window onto this topic do you plan on opening? Do you plan to profile a single perspective, compare multiple views, capture a cultural moment, tell an expansive history?

Preferably compare multiple views by compiling the different approaches that educational institutions use in order to address LGBTQ+ mental health concerns.

Story and Theme:

- What is your story? If you can't write it or tell it succinctly—under forty words— you're probably still unsure.

LGBTQ+ youth suicide is a major problem, so we're looking to see how educational institutions address this and if they're any way that we can either improve or reinforce these methods.

- What is the underlying theme? How does your story link with larger social, historical or humanistic questions?

The underlying theme is care and empathy for this community, and it links with the larger heteronormative systems of homophobia, transphobia, and queerphobia that have shaped the United States (and the world) so far.

Modes:

- What are the pros and cons for using each mode (expository, observational, reflexive, participatory, autobiographical, performative, poetic, reflexive, essayistic) as the primary means of plotting your story?

Reflexive:

cinema that called attention to the formal processes of filmmaking rather than trying to create an illusion of reality on screen for the sake of escapist narratives and passive spectatorship. He argued that editing should not create continuity, but rather conflict— conflict of light, mood, rhythm, graphical properties, and ideas. Meaning in cinema did not come from the individual shots, but rather through ideas spawned by their collision.

- Pros: Creative approach to storytelling and filmmaking, could be interesting

- Cons: Takes away from the actual material that we're trying to go into

Poetic:

makers seek out inventive or alternative approaches to representing reality. Ivens finds ways to denature the commonplace occurrence of a rainstorm and allows us to look at it again with fresh eyes, arguably the goal of every documentary filmmaker.

- Pros: Fresh take to this, and several other queer documentaries have tried this approach

- Cons: Unsure if tone of Poetic fits

Expository:

Still the preferred mode of most journalistic reportage and television documentaries, the expository mode “explains” with the purpose of offering a linear, logical, didactic argument. The image track is usually silent; synchronous location sound is replaced by the disembodied, voiceover narration that serves as the film’s organizing principle.

- Pros: Straightforward, to the point, and good at going through a lot of information

- Cons: Kinda boring and basic

Observational:

camera crew was progressively forgotten or acclimated to, permitting the filmmakers to capture action as it occurred without influencing its course. Gone were the voiceovers and subordinate image tracks of expository documentary. Such direct cinema favored long takes in which audiences were permitted to experience an event in real-time, without the intrusion of explanatory voiceover.

- Pros: Immersive

- Cons: Invasive

Participatory:

the filmmakers recruiting their subjects as active participants, further breaking down or at least consciously addressing the inherent power imbalance between producer and subject.

- Pros: Lots of affect and pathos with this, and also gives connection due to direct communication

- Cons: Potentially invasive

Performative:

Popularizing feminist adages like “The personal is political,” and “Your body is a battleground,” these practitioners turned the camera around to record their own bodies as a means of social change

- Pros: Powerful, personal

- Cons: Feels weirdly selfish to be placing myself in this narrative

Autobiographical:

Beyond such collective performative efforts, certain individuals soon began engaging the *autobiographical mode*, putting their own faces and stories to the socially divisive issues of AIDS and gay identity at large

- Pros: Very personal, could tell my own story

-Cons: Unsure how to explore topic when centered on me

Essayistic:

Coming from a verb as it does, this mode is an active one, in which a proposed idea or question is tested by a range of means and intersecting lines of argument. One stab may lead to a tangentially related concept, personal anecdote, or new approach, providing a serpentine, unexpected, and present tense realness to the journey. Quite often an essay does not arrive at a finite conclusion, yet the ideas discovered during the process may reshape and reinform the initial query in unforeseen ways.

-Pros: Allows for us not to know the answer, explores many routes, could give wide depth

-Cons: Danger of not being able to focus

- What combination of modes might best tell your story?

Essayistic, expository

- How will this combination of modes shape the way in which audiences see and hear your story?

Allows audience to go along with us as we explore multiple methods of healthcare.

Audience:

- Who is your intended audience?

Education administrators who want to create mental health resources that are inclusive to LGBTQ+ students.

- How have other works on this topic succeeded or failed in reaching this audience?

Not many topics have directly addressed this in the way that this project will.

- Is there general knowledge audience members will likely already understand that you can recap briefly and move on from, rather than ceding it too much screen time?

LGBTQ+ youth suicide is an issue in the United States.

- What are the major concerns, questions, interests, and needs of this audience?

Gaining enough resources to actually bring new knowledge to a group of professionals, and doing research that is actually helpful and not harmful to the community this film is trying to advocate for,

- Are there specific issues of language, cultural tradition, or storytelling that you should address or that can help you in reaching this audience as you define your world and plot your story?

I am not sure - requires more research.

- How can you directly engage this community or group in the planning and production of your project?

Possibly interviewing them as subjects during the project.

Function:

- What do you want audiences to come away thinking, feeling, and doing?

I would like for them to think that they've walked away with valuable information and the feeling of empowerment to actually implement it.

- Brainstorm the possible claims to reality your documentary might make, in simple active verbs.

Enlighten

Empower

Justice

Move

Explore

Unique take

- Narrow this list down to the central functions you respond to most powerfully, and consider the modes, stance, and rhetoric that might best communicate these functions.

Enlighten people about this specific issue (expository)

Explore the different ways that this issue is addressed (essayistic)

Stance and Rhetoric:

- What are your own feelings, beliefs, and opinions about this issue or subject?

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community who has had personal experience with the mental health issues that I'm writing about, I feel very strongly that this is an issue and that schools are not doing enough.

- What position are you making a claim for in your documentary?

I am making a claim for more action or a widespread change in how we act.

- What are some arguments or approaches you can utilize that appeal to ethos, pathos, or logos?

Ethos - Master's students researching, using mental health experts and school administrators to talk to us

Pathos - Children are dying

Logos - There are very specific methods schools can use to lower LGBTQ+ suicide

- What other prevailing stances stand in opposition to yours? How do you intend to address these in your work?

There's the prevailing stance that schools are already doing all they can do or that they're not responsible for the individual decision of students. Addressing these will be a large part of this project.

Structure:

- How does your story begin? How does it end? What are the particular events or questions that comprise its middle, taking us on a rich journey and linking beginning to end?

Begins with the question of LGBTQ+ youth suicide, and ends with some possible answers (or more provocative questions) on how to lower it by using healthcare within school systems. The middle will be comprised of going into each school system to learn more about it.

- Does your story lend itself to a linear, causal structuring or to episodic compartmentalization? Alternatively, are the links or transitions between scenes and sequences more thematic in character?

Episodic compartmentalization due to the fact that I'll be changing settings for each school.

- What major obstacles or events coming up in the lives of your subjects can you isolate that might warrant you shooting scenes of preparation, experience, and after- math as a means of advancing story and creating character arcs?

LGBTQ+ Pride Month, Mental Health Month

- What is the present tense of your documentary? How can you be sure your documentary's subjects and information don't simply float in an expository ether, not rooted in any distinct time or place?

Mention rising rate of youth suicide in the country?