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Dear aspiring future A level student

I hope you are settling in nicely to life at the Sixth Form Centre and all is well.

I'd like to take this time to inform you that whilst putting together the magazine you will be tasked to create, you will gather a multitude of each creative production, technical production and transferable skills that can be applied to all forms of media. Trust me, I gained so much more than I ever thought I would or could!

A key technical skill I learnt was to make pinpoint cutouts of images using photoshop to perfect the photos of my star cover models and any other objects I would go on to use for my pages. The difference a refined and cut out image can have on your media is that your star image will look better presented, your image will fit flush with the background giving a slick and thoroughly polished impression on the media consumer. The cut out is in turn conventional to have on the cover. This is because the model is the focal point of the images and text. Every good magazine has faultless cutouts and as we have software such as photoshop available to us, why can't ours! I didn't think I could be as accurate as I was, in fact I surprised myself! You will find the process both enjoyable and laborious but the outcome will make it all worth it. The feeling of having created your own magazine, your own brand. It's gold dust!

Some creative skills I learnt were; creating my own gradients, un-hyphenating text, adding drop shadow, adding bevel and emboss. All in which work to aid the text, images and cutouts to stand out from the page creating a real sense of perspective within your pages. Remember, you can get creative with all of the tools available. Use them, and to your own advantage, because it's your work that you want to get good marks for, and why not! One thing I loved about the magazine creating is that I had to come up with my own colour scheme and my own name. From then on I was able to roam free as a media producer. Keeping what works and trashing what didn't. The drafting process is good because your magazine is becoming more cohesive and stylised but it is also beneficial for your personal gain because you are able to see just the very extent of how far your technical production skills have advanced. The impact such skills had on my project were that they made my pages attractive and bold. Instead of them looking like I just threw some text and an image on a page, you can tell I found enjoyment in having a range of colour palettes and gradients towards my final magazine drafts.

Of course the process doesn't just involve sitting at a desktop editing and typing, you gather some key transferable skills. You have to arrange people, sorting who brings what to a photo shoot. What times, props, locations and styles for any given shoot or event. Your models need to be informed and they must be organised. This is all arranged through a production meeting agenda which is a vastly transferable skill. This is as a production meeting agenda is a basis for gathering some organisation behind a project. An example of how the use of a production meeting agenda is vital for a photoshoot was the props section where I wrote to bring a bandana. The bandana is a typically conventional clothing piece for rap and urban gang style which helped my artist be represented as contemporary, fashionable and conventional to my chosen genre which was underground rap & hip hop.

You will shortly learn to prioritize your workload which in media, this is a vital component to achieving the grades you are after and not falling behind. This is as I wouldn't class the work you will get as hard in any way if you are creative and energetic. The point is, that your work mounts up in all walks of life and personally, I feel as if it is best to clear your work for the week by staying in at a break or two during, rather than wasting your weekend when you could be having fun with your friends!

The most valuable transferable skill I picked up over the course of this recent project, was doing market research which can be applied to any form of marketing, creating and producing. In the case of this project, I surfed the web for enticing articles, I read through magazines and saw things I could use and conventions I should look at following. An example of this is where, during my research I found that album review articles are written in the 3rd person tense. This helped me understand how technical you can get with article magazine formatting and typing.

Lastly, I would like to touch on the photography side of the project. You will do around three shoots throughout the project and as I have just experienced, you won't want to be doing any reshoots. The weeks are tightly scheduled, your time is limited and planning a reshoot is not what you want to be doing. So, get it right! If you aren't completely sure how to use the lighting in the black and white studio, ask Aron to run you over it once more. After all the flash function on the lights is there to help create a nice dynamic between your model and the backdrop, the flash ensures your images are crisp and clarified. Flash photography has large impacts on a photoshoot. If you use the equipment poorly, you will have low light tacky and unrefined looking images and they will be unusable. Another example could be, say you aren't clear on what camera function does what, stay after class and get Mrs Cobb to show you. That's what she wants to do, she wants to help you get the best results possible!

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Nonetheless, I hope this letter finds you well

Yours faithfully,

Henry Gray of the Sixth Form Centre