

# Film as curriculum: short film isn't just for media majors -- every student should do it

By John Hildreth

[RADFORD UNIVERSITY](#)

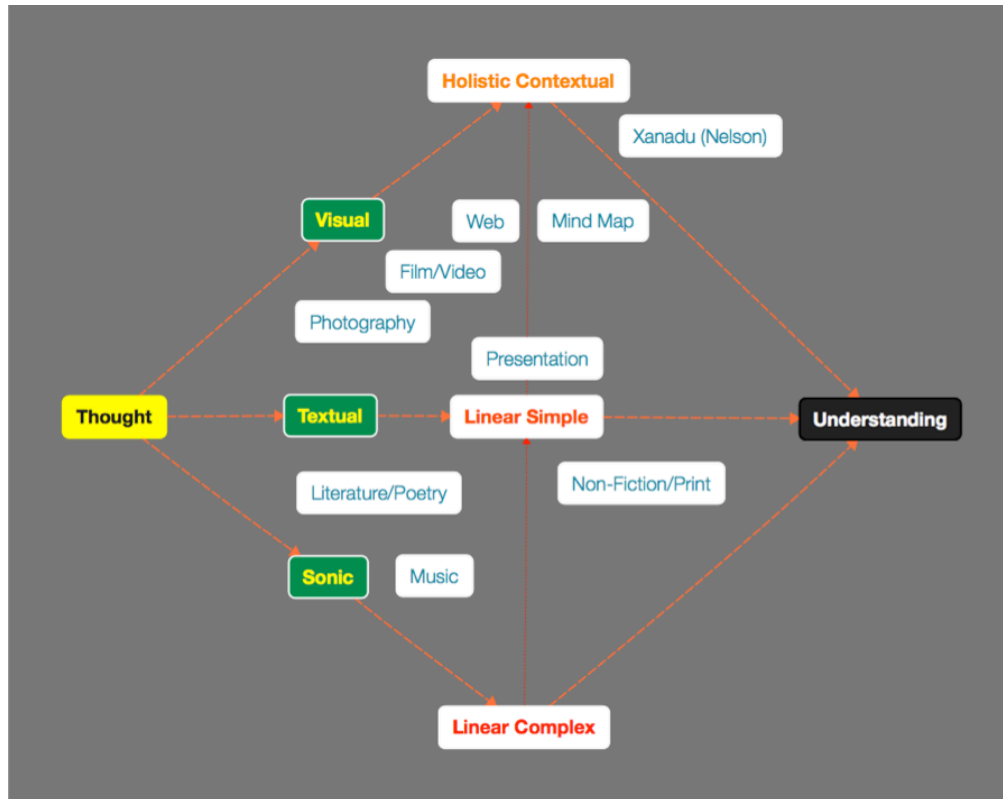


Photo: Josh Shine

The multifaceted planning and creative thinking that goes into producing a short film is a process relevant to any student, regardless of discipline. Producing a film requires successfully performing a series of interdisciplinary skills over time:

- *Visualization and conceptualizing*
- *Writing*
- *Working with others*
- *Working on a schedule*
- *Technology expertise*
- *Critical thinking*
- *Problem solving*

All of these skills fit together to facilitate the development of **complex thinking** that students need to succeed in life, work and the world at large. These skills are applicable to every field of study. Having one or more short film projects in a portfolio does amazing things to enhance a student's brand and professional identity.



Graphic: Tom Haymes

Behind every successful business venture, scientific discovery or educational breakthrough is a creative and visualization process that bridges the divide between idea and reality. Filmmaking manifests this process.



Photo: Vancouver Film School

With the widespread availability of mobile technology, multimedia tools and learning resources, students have access to resources on an unprecedented level.

Integrating filmmaking as part of undergraduate and graduate curriculum provides students with creative opportunities to develop exceptional skills that are otherwise unattainable.



Photo: Josh Shine

It all comes down to ***crafting a message and telling a story***. Any kind of film — educational, advertisement, research, dramatic — seeks to do these things effectively.

**Natural sciences** utilize field recording and documenting techniques for research and advocacy. Success in this area can have a profound impact on grants and funding as well as public understanding of important scientific issues.

**Marketing** utilizes the short film format to craft specific messages and stories for targeted advertisements.

**Humanities** leverage film (documentary, dramatic, etc.) to explore issues of social science, history, cognition, faith and religion, justice and cultural relevance.

**Education** utilizes short film to produce learning materials and facilitate fundamental skills for every age group. A recent close-to-home example includes the [Fall 2016 Word Festival](#), in which students from Radford University and area high schools honed language and communication skills by producing 20-second vocabulary videos.

**Communications** develops best practices, performs research and creates techniques about how film and other media function in society with respect to press, law and human interaction.

