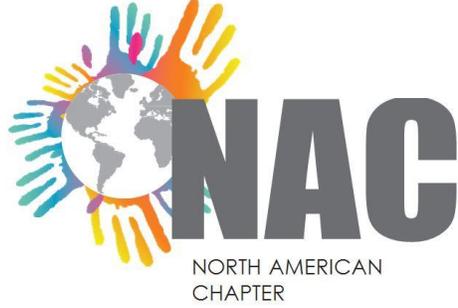


Transmission of Educational Content in Social Media: The Case of “Uzman TV”

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Abstract

The proliferation of social networks through advancement of communication technologies has also enhanced and diversified the educational content. Attractive rendering the educational content on social networks rests on the effective generation of this content.

“Uzman TV” (Expert TV) which has been broadcasting since the year 2008, provides educational content to millions of viewers over the internet. “Uzman TV” does not target a specific audience for its productions. To the contrary, it offers educational content that is intended for audiences with diverse (ethnic, linguistic, religious, racial, socio-economic etc.) backgrounds. “Uzman TV” is the first and only web-site in Turkey which provides mass education content in audio-visual form along side formal education content. Educational content of the aired videos are narrated by subject matter experts at “Uzman TV” and also these educational videos are offered in a wide range of subjects. These distinctive features are the reason why “Uzman TV” is examined in this study.

This study aims to make assessments through examining quantitative and qualitative data on the educational videos aired on “Uzman TV”. For this purpose, the researchers examined whether or not the audio-visual material used for ensuring effective communication while transmitting educational content in social networks was deliberately used as a method of communication. In the context of this study, the seven most viewed videos under the genre “Education” were examined and propositions were made following the examination.

Key Words: Social Media, Uzman TV, Education and Teaching Platforms in Social Networks, Video Productions, Visual Communication, Effective Communication

Introduction

Technology is deeply intertwined with human life and makes its presence felt in all aspects of life. One of the most important areas is mass communication. Technical infrastructure is a must to enable communication with the masses. Improvement in communication technologies, new communication tools, new techniques and forms brought by these improvements, are effective to create this structure. Rapidly evolving technology has also changed the scope, content and understanding in mass media, and has moved the individual to a more active position than before.

The most commonly used mass communication tool is the internet. This interactive communication medium becomes more widespread with the appearance of social media. As the internet become more and more widespread, access to information/resources become nearly limitless. Today, internet based learning, as an educational tool, is commonly used. Because of this nearly limitless access, improvements in education are important topics of discussion. This also includes educational videos structured by using audio-visual elements that may be accessed on the internet.

Social media is a form of communication, which mainly includes sharing and discussions without time and place restrictions. In other words, it is a set of internet-based tools that allows people to share their ideas, contents, profiles, ideas, perspectives and perceptions. Social media is a very comprehensive term and includes a wide variety of platforms. Social media consists of blogs, micro-blogs, social networks, forums, and chatting websites. Social networks are getting increasingly important because they provide more active and creative participation, more open collaboration, and often faster feedback in individual communication.

Social networks aim to create virtual groups which bring people sharing similar interests together, to allow internet users to communicate and share content, through providing a platform for discussion. In other words, social networks carry out a learning function enabling interaction of people and information sharing. This function makes the use of social networks beneficial for education purposes. As previously mentioned, social networks provide more active participation, open collaboration and faster feedback in individual learning. The rapid evolution of technology compels people to repeatedly recreate the information gained through lifelong learning. Besides, the perception of individuals that they are using a socializing platform and not an education platform makes this education more interesting. However, as in formal education, rendering the educational content depends on the effective transmission of the educational content on social platforms.

Preparing educational content requires detailed, careful, and intensive work. High attention to detail becomes even more important when preparing educational videos for social networks. This is due to the fact there is a greater number of components in an educational video than those in written and oral educational content. Thus, when used in different ways, various components of educational videos can create various effects. Using the content to serve the objective in the most fitting way is called “effective communication” (Künüçen, 2009, p. 58). The main component of visual expression is image. Video producers try to achieve effective communication through image sequencing. If images are used for educational purposes to provide the effective communication, components of images should be arranged in accordance with purpose of the education. The components of images can be listed as follows:
Scenario/Component/Theme/Subject/Dramatic Structure, Image Editing, Frame/Framing, Place, Stage Design/Décor/Costume/Accessories, Lighting, Color, Visual Angle, Camera

Angles/Shooting Scales, Camera Movements, Announcer/Performer/Expert, Sound and Music, Editing, and Graphic.

Preparing a video requires gathering various elements listed above, with an artistic point of view and in accordance with the purpose. Therefore, preparing educational content to provide effective communication requires detailed, careful, and intensive work. This intensive and careful work is more important in educational videos. In other words, preparing a video that serves a particular purpose needs a concordant arrangement of the components. As this process is based on professional knowledge, experience, and creativity, it is not easy to create informative productions for individuals.

In visual narrative grammar, there are particular rules for each component of image. There are also various effects for certain patterns. Visual components may motivate individuals by attracting their attention then making them react emotionally, grasp concepts, and by simplifying the concepts that are difficult to understand (Demirel, Seferoğlu, & Yağcı, 2001, p.27). Video producers have to use these components in accordance with the purpose of the educational material. In visual communication, “how the content is transmitted” is an important issue for efficacy of communication. The way of producing the components of visual elements, by other means, how the content is presented, determines the aesthetic structure and the perception of the message. If the production is not interesting, the presentation will be unsuccessful and will not attract attention or be enjoyed. Therefore, the content will not be transmitted as wanted, and the education program will not fulfill the purpose.

The hypothesis of this study is “the usage of the visual components that creates image is an indicator for perception of the transmitted message”. Based on this hypothesis, the aim of this article is to make evaluations and recommendations on the effective usage of visual components

through qualitative and quantitative information on social media-based educational programs. Using this information, types of production components, their usage, and to what extent they serve the educational purposes in the visualization process are discussed. In other words, how the component in educational program is visually transmitted is evaluated and a case study is conducted.

In this study, seven video productions from “Uzman TV”, a website broadcasting educational videos, were analyzed. Uzman TV was selected for its editorial policy of non-discrimination against religion, language, ethnics, and social status, thus creating an educational culture of inclusion and equity. Additional reasons for selection included: it has both formal and non-formal educational content; it is the first website in Turkey to provide this service visually, and it also gets support from the experts when preparing the content and videos broadcasted cover a great range of topics.

In the study, video productions under the topic “Admission the Faculty of Fine Arts” under the category university education, which is within the “Education and Career” channel, according to the rules for mission of WCCI, were analyzed. The criteria for selection of these videos were their number of viewers. The selected videos have the following topics: “Which questions are asked in the Aptitude Test for Faculty of Fine Arts?”, “What phases do the tests have?”, “What discussions are made in admission interviews?”, “Who can apply for the tests?”, “Are there tests conducted for each department of the faculty?”, “Which type of grants does the faculty have?”, and “Is pre-registration required?”.

In the analysis, the coherence with the purpose, with the components of images, and the way these images are produced, are examined. The results are discussed in terms of use of effective audio-visual language and recommendations are made for more efficient expression.

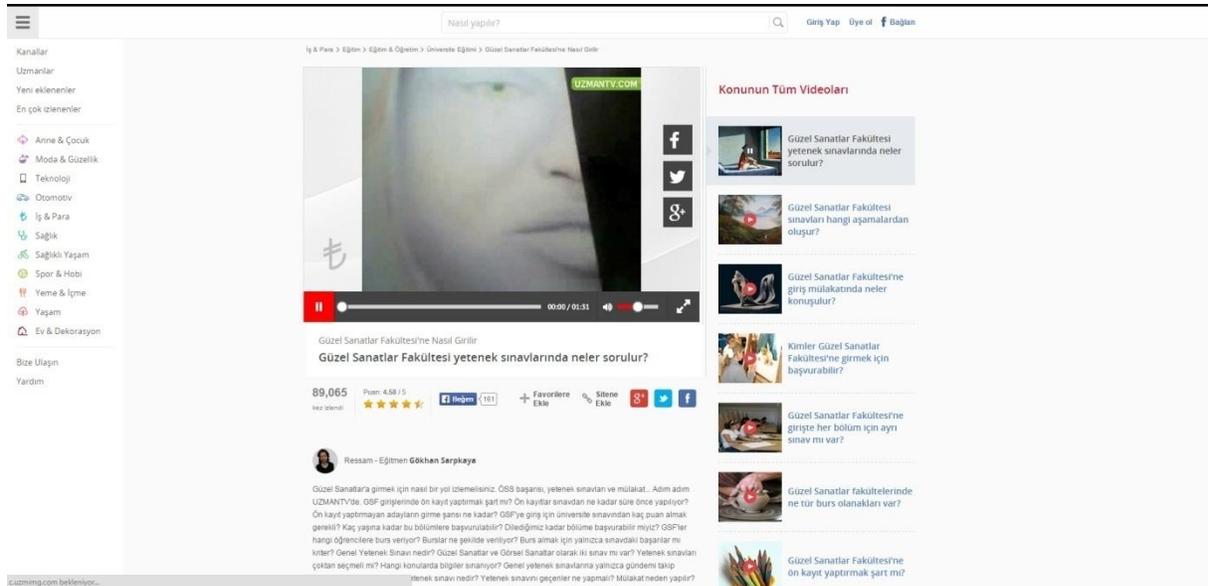


Figure 1

Uzman TV

“Uzman TV” is a website that prepares educational videos and broadcasts these videos since 2007. As of March 7, 2015, at 12:00; there are 54.320 videos, presented by 2505 experts including university professors and specialists on Mother and Child, Fashion and Beauty, Technology, Automobiles, Business and Money, Healthy Lifestyle, Sports and Hobbies, Food and Beverage, Living, House and Decorating topics. The questions and the comments of the audience on videos are replied to by the experts on the website. Website visitors are able to register, free of charge, to ask questions and get feedback on their questions. It also provides an opportunity for the visitors to visit the website and share the videos through the internet and social media sites (Facebook/Twitter).

Analysis of Audio-Visual Language of Video Productions Under The Topic “How To Enter Faculty Of Fine Arts”

1. Scenario/ dramatic structure: Selected videos include information and recommendations for Faculty of Fine Arts candidates. The content is presented by experts.

Information given by the experts is completed by the inserted images. However, there is occasional disharmony between the images and the content. For instance, while presenting the information on scores needed for the test, images of people painting are inserted. To present an effective audio-visual language, image and the audio should be compatible with each other.

In educational videos, the main aspect to be transmitted to the audience is the content, making the text presented by the expert more important. Nevertheless, regardless of the type of video used, the text and the image should be in harmony. Instead of inserting images of people painting, a text describing how the interview tests are conducted should be supported by images of interviews, or students waiting in the examination hall.



Figure 2: Opening scenes

Figure 3: Closing scenes

One of the problems about this scenario is the opening and the closing scenes of the video (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). In video productions, the audience should be prepared for the opening and the closing scenes. Videos selected have fast opening and closing scenes. In video productions, rapid introduction may cause negative effects on the audience's preparedness. Additionally, a rapid closing may cause a feeling of incompleteness and uncertainty. This situation may disrupt the perception and cause distractions. To overcome this issue, at the beginning, the written title of the topic may be given. At the end of the video, the expert may share good wishes or written information about the contributors on the subject may be provided.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figure 6

2. Framing and picture composition: Framing is mostly an artistic and professional selection process. Framing is the positioning of visual materials that will be included or excluded in the image frame, from an aesthetic point of view. If the visualization is improper, no matter how important the topic is, the video cannot transmit the content properly. The audience desires to get an aesthetic pleasure from the images they see. If the framing and editing rules are not correctly used, the audience will be displeased with the images produced. All components of images are effective in framing. The most common and the most noticeable mistakes in framing are disharmony with the content, decor and accessories. The video analyzed reveals that the background images are distracting. This can cause divergence or disappearance of interest from the expert/announcer (see Figure 4). During the presentation by the expert, the most attractive

object should be the expert. Vertical and horizontal lines formed by the frames of charcoal drawings, creates an impression that the screen, even the people are divided into two parts (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). This does not comply with the rules of image editing.



Figure 1

3. Place/stage design/décor/costume/accessories: Shooting of video productions may take place inside in an artificial setting, outside in a natural setting, or a combination of both places. In educational videos, the selected place should provide the audience a related environment with the topic being taught. Suitability of the place, size of the area, and number of people who will use this area are important selection criteria. The place is determined after getting the answers to the questions: “how many people will be attending, what kind of medium will be used for presentation, who or what will be shown”. The place selected for educational programs should support teaching and should not distract attention.

The stage is the whole area at the screen. The place is arranged in this area. This formation and the desired medium are created by the décor. Stage design is critically important in image editing and attracting the audience. The target population is crucial in the preparation phase of the video production. This factor determines the format of the whole production. In the production phase, age, sex, educational status of the target group should be carefully examined

while the place selection, stage, décor, costume, graphics and accessories should be accordingly determined. In the selected video, it would be more effective if more vivid and warm colors, instead of black, could be selected for the costume of the expert, in terms of compliance with the target audience (see Figure 7). These videos are prepared for university candidates/youth. In addition, in video productions, using the accessories compatible with the topic and the content, has a reinforcing effect and contributes to the visual expression.



Figure 2

4. Lighting: Lighting is one of the main elements of expression and an esthetic in video productions. It is one of the most effective tools in attracting the audience's attention to one particular point and creates a depth effect in expression. The main mistake about lighting in the analyzed videos is that they have improper lighting. This was inadequate to create the desired depth effect. Using a lighting that can bring the expert on the foreground, could separate the expert from the background, the depth effect could be created, and a three-dimensional perception could be provided. In this situation the attention would be drawn to the expert. This would make the audience more focused on what the expert is sharing and help the audience have a better understanding of the content. As described earlier, the audience desires to get an aesthetic pleasure from the images they see. Instead of improper lighting, aesthetically attractive lighting should be preferred.



Figure 3

5. Color: Colors are attractive and have a powerful effect on people's psychology. That is why the importance of using colors as an expression tool in video productions, cannot be ignored. The nature of the target population is also important when selecting the colors to be used. As the target population of this video is the youth who want to enter the Faculty of Fine Arts, the colors that will address young people should be selected. Instead of black and grey, which covers most of the framing; it would be more effective if more vivid and warm colors were selected. This would be a more effective way of attracting the attention of the audience.

6. Sound and music: Sound and music are the supportive elements in creating meaning and providing the desired effect of the image in video productions. In analyzed videos, sound and music are successfully used. Music continues in the background, and in the sections where the expert opinions are given, the sound is moved to the background or is muted. During scenes where the expert is not present, sound increases by coming to the foreground. In addition, the rhythm of the music is in harmony with the editing and supports the effective expression.

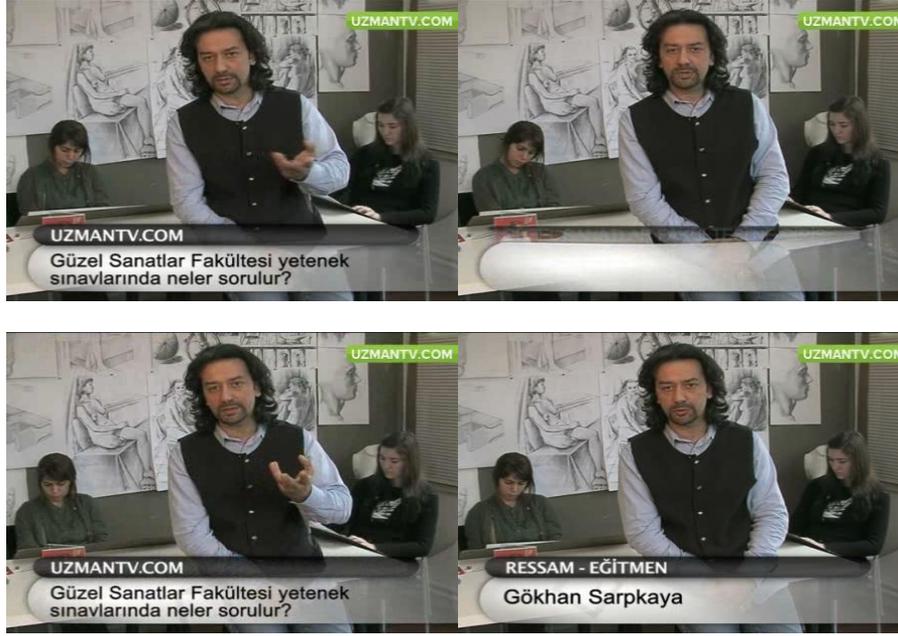


Figure 4

7. Camera angles/shooting scales: Camera angles and shooting scales are the most effective elements in video production. For the audience, to see the subject from the exact same point, from the same angle and in the same size continuously, may be boring. Camera angle is one of the most effective tools of creating the depth effect. In video productions, to stare at the subject in only one direction, without using a camera angle, weakens the depth effect. Changes made by using the camera angles and shooting scales, are important in attracting the attention of the audience and sustaining their attention. To show the subject at the same scale; by other means continuously at the same size in the frame renders the image boring and stable leading the audience to lose interest. Shots with different camera angles and shooting scales are effective visual expression tools. These serve to inform the audience more about the subject and may draw the attention of the audience to a certain point of focus. In the analyzed video productions, the camera angle and the shooting scales are not changed during the presentation of the expert. This situation is not a proper way of visual expression as it makes the audience distracted and after a while, bored. It is not effective in ensuring the sustainability of attention. In sections where the

important details are presented, a close-up scale would be better so the audience could see the expert more closely. In this way, the details could easily be emphasized and it would be a better way for effective expression.



Figure 5

Figure 6

8. Announcer/performer/expert: In video productions, people on the screen are effective elements of expression in terms of speaking skills and body language. According to the content and the target audience, the speaking style, the body language and gestures of the announcer/expert at the screen, should vary during the speech. If the speaking style is not in harmony with the content, it can create a distracting and possibly an odd situation for the audience. For instance, if a speaker refers to someone who died with a smiling face or using an excited or energetic tone, it would be inappropriate. In the analyzed videos, the voice of the expert is stable, emphasis is weak, and energy is low. It should be more dynamic and energetic as he wants to communicate with young people. His body language and gestures are insufficient to emphasize the subject.

Another important issue is the crossed arms of the expert. Arms can act as the doorway to the body and the self. According to body language experts, crossed arms means putting distance with the audience and is an indicator for miscommunication. When they are crossed, they form a closed defensive shield, blocking out the outside world. Besides, the expert prefers looking at a

different point outside the frame, instead of looking at the audience. This shows that he does not communicate with the audience face-to-face. The expert talking to the audience without looking at them avoids communication.

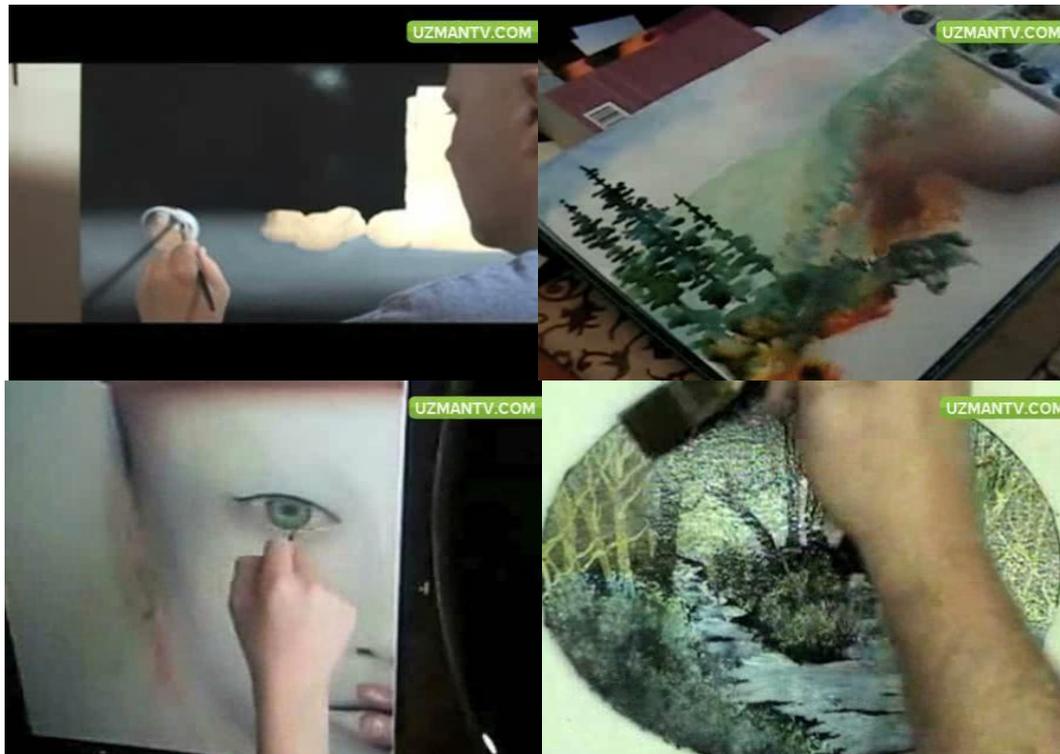


Figure 7

9. Editing: Editing is sequencing or combining sound, text and images adhering to particular aesthetic rules. Editing is one of the most effective ways to strengthen expression. The presence of movement in the frame decreases the stability of the image and helps in drawing attention to a particular point. Editing is one of the features used to provide movement in video productions. This movement is provided by sequencing various shots consecutively. The rhythm of editing is determined by the combined length of shots. As the length of the shots increase the editing rhythm decelerates; in the opposite situation, it accelerates. In analyzed videos it is difficult to argue for a successful editing. In a successful editing, there has to be different camera

angles and different shooting scales from one shot to another. This is necessary for a clear and effective expression. Moving from one image to another will create a movement and draw the attention of the audience. In these video productions, one camera angle and one shooting scale is used. Therefore editing was almost unnecessary. However, editing process in scenes where the expert is not present draws attention. In such scenes, use of accelerating images and different shots in harmony with the rhythm of music, supports the expression.



Figure 8

10. Graphic: Using graphic components including charts, shapes, numbers, text, photos, maps, and animations is important for visual perception and supports learning. The analyzed videos do not have a structure that needs usage of so many graphics. In these videos only video headings are used. The headings inserted on the images holds a lot of space in the frame. Because of the great size of the font, the attention for the expert decreases. Also the text does not give much information about the content.

In educational productions, the graphic component should support the content and the main topics emphasized by the expert should also be supported by graphics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Rapid evolving and changing of communication technologies increase the educational needs of individuals. In educational productions, to reach the expected purpose, effective use of

presentation and communication technologies is important. This is also true for videos produced by using audio-visual components through social media. The content and how it is transmitted are also important thorough internet-based teaching to increase the quality of teaching. In video productions “how the content is transmitted” is as important as “what the content is.” In other words the presentation format is more effective in communication.

Experts do research on various educational models. In educational videos, to increase the quality of education, “production process” is an important issue. “How the elements of scenario, editing, lighting, sound, and color are used,” in other words, “how they are used” creates a “presentation format.” This presentation format in educational videos is expected to serve the teaching purposes. The teaching effectiveness of the expert/announcer and presentation effectiveness will bring about a successful educational video.

In this study, selected videos from Uzman TV, which is a web-based TV having an inclusive and equitable teaching policy, were analyzed for essential elements in visual communication and the adverse conditions, and recommendations are made to overcome the drawbacks.

In some sections of the productions, sound and images are not used in harmony with each other. One of the most important elements in educational videos is the harmony between the described and the image. These videos do not contain images supporting what the expert is explaining. Supporting the verbal content with images will help effective learning.

In the educational videos, problems with the use of space and stage design also draw attention. Use of natural spaces is a production feature that creates a sense of reality in the audience and makes the audience more focused on the content. Using a variety of spaces is another effective way of expression that gives dynamism to the production and enables the

audience to watch the videos without getting bored. There was no variety in the spaces used in analyzed videos. This causes the distraction and makes the educational content to be more difficult to follow. Stage design requires simplicity and arrangements to facilitate the audience's ability to focus on the subject. Costumes, colors and accessories should be selected concerning the structure of the target audience.

There are also technical and aesthetic mistakes in use of camera angles, shooting scales, length of shots, lighting, and editing in selected videos. To eliminate mistakes, and to draw the attention of audience to a particular point; use of camera angles, shooting scales to make them focus on the subject, length of shots to avoid distraction, aesthetic images, and lighting to create the depth effect, editing of sound, text and visual rhythm arranged in accordance with each other, should be preferred.

It is understood that the mistakes in these videos are due to lack of professional information, experience, and quality of the production team. Therefore, in video productions, a team, including people each specialized in their own fields, should come together to work because video production is a team work.

There are three basic dimensions of program production: science, profession and art. Employees of the program production should have experience covering all of these three dimensions. Gathering educated and experienced people on visual communication, image aesthetic, and program production, to make a production team, will make it easier to eliminate mistakes. This will also prevent loss of money, labor, time, and wasted efforts. In conclusion, by successful presentation, effective transmission of educational content will enable achievement of teaching goals.

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