

Interactive Short Film for Teaching Moral Education in Schools



M.Des Project 2
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DECLARATION

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/ data/ fact/ source in my submission.

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APPROVAL

The following Design Project titled 'Interactive Short Film for Teaching Moral Education in Schools' by Anubhav Nagpal is approved for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the dual degree 'Bachelors of Design + Masters of Design' at IDC School Of Design, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

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CONTENTS

Abstract	6
Introduction	7
Background Study	8
Worldwide Moral Education	9
Primary Research	10
Screenplay	11
Production and Editing	15
Interactive Prototyping	16
Conclusion and Future Prospect	17

ABSTRACT

This project explores an advanced concept of teaching Moral Education in schools with the help of meticulously designed interactive short films utilizing Choice Architecture and the Soviet Montage Theory. The final output of this project is a short film, prototyped online with interactive capabilities for teaching values.

The students' all round performance in schools is inversely related to the amount of bullying and violence faced in the schools (OECD, PISA 2015 Database) and the introduction of Moral Education in schools drastically reduces the instances of bullying and violence (MEXT 2007 - 2012).

In this project, research was done on the education systems, Moral Education curriculum and teaching methods in schools in several countries to find scope for improvement in the Moral Education imparted in Indian schools. Analysing their curriculum and upon primary research with current school students, a new curriculum was designed for class VII.

Research to understand Choice Architecture and Soviet Montage Theory along with in depth analysis of several interactive films was done to understand the medium and its potential. The insights were used to make an interactive short film for imparting Moral Education.

INTRODUCTION

Moral education is often regarded as a high priority subject in schools among the countries with the top student performance. It has been evident that not only does the inclusion of moral education improve the scores obtained by students in other subjects but also reduces the cases of bullying and violence in schools (PISA 2015 database; MEXT 2007 -2012). As important as it is, the Moral education in India lacks the teaching methods and curriculum to meet the interests of students.

In this project, education systems around the world were analysed along with interviews from Indian school students on the subject to form an updated curriculum for Moral Education. The findings were used in making an interactive short film for teaching Moral Education in class VII, focusing on the topics from the updated curriculum.

To make the film, several interactive films were analysed. Choice Architecture and the Soviet Montage Theory were studied to meticulously design the film with utmost impact.

The final output of this project, an interactive short film that imparts the values of sportsmanship, forgiveness and the importance of effective communication for good relations, was prototyped using YouTube. The aim of this film was to impart virtues while keeping the interest of students and added element of fun.

Future scope of such films and activity based teaching methods is also discussed in this project with additional screenplays and concepts for all round development of school students.

Background Study

Libertian Paternalism is the idea that it is both possible and ethical to influence the behavior and choice while respecting the freedom of choice of the decision maker (Sunstein and Thaler, 2003).

It can be executed by utilizing the **Nudge Theory** and **Choice Architecture**, which is to design the choices presented to a person, affecting :

- The number of choices presented
- The order in which the choices are presented
- The manner in which the features are described
- The presence of a *default choice* among them

In order to *nudge* or influence the person into choosing an option that is more favorable to them, as judged by the person himself/ herself.

In order to gain a better understanding of human behaviour and Choice Architecture so that effective choices could be designed for the *hotspots*(points in the film where the viewers are asked to make a choice for the characters and change the course of the plot) in the interactive film, the following books were studied :

- Nudge : Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness - Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein
- Thinking, Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman

A detailed study of the education systems from around the world was also done to understand the various curriculums, and teaching methods in order to fabricate a curriculum that is well suited for Indian school students.

Worldwide Moral Education

The major factor that influence the education systems around that world are:

- Money spent on Education, directly linked to the country's wealth, GDP, and the importance given to formal education.
- Time given to formal education, for example, the An average US school has 189 work days whereas the average Korean school has 220 work days in an year. This however is not directly related to students' performance as the teaching methods and curriculum play a vital role as well.

The common things among top ranking (PISA) countries' education systems (as per US National Public Radio) are :

- Well established standards for education
- Clear goals for students, set by curriculum
- Teachers being selected from the top 10% of university graduates.

Continued training courses for teachers is also a trait often seen in the education system in the top ranking countries.

The in depth analysis of Moral education system and teaching methods was done for the countries that have consistently secured top ranks at PISA - Program for International Student Assessment, organised by OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), a UN observer constituting 38 member nations as of 2021. A research on the curriculum and teaching methods for India was also conducted.

Twelve out of fifteen top ranking countries at PISA have a formal and compulsory moral education curriculum in place. The students' all round performance in schools is inversely related to the amount of bullying and violence faced in the schools (OECD, PISA 2015 Database). And the introduction of Moral Education in schools drastically reduces the instances of bullying and violence (MEXT 2007 - 2012).

Primary Research

Fifteen interactive films/ games were analysed for this project. The purpose was to understand the pacing and variation in stakes at every choice given to the viewers.

- Minecraft - Story Mode
- The Wolf Among Us
- Doki Doki Literature Club
- You Vs Wild - Animals On The Loose
- Blackmirror - Bandersnatch
- Boss Baby - Get That Baby
- Stretch Armstrong - The Breakout
- Puss in Boots - Trapped in an Epic Tale
- Carmen Sandiego - To Steal or Not to Steal
- Spirit Riding Free - Ride Along Adventure
- The Last Kids on Earth - Happy Apocolypse to You
- Captain Underpants - Choice - O - Rama
- Kimmy Vs The Reverend
- Buddy Thunderstruck : The Maybe Pile
- Headspace - Unwind Your Mind

In Interactive films, the point of decision making for the viewer is known as a *hotspot*. Through a hotspot, many levels or plot lines may emerge or get deducted from the narrative that is ultimately experienced by the viewers.

For this analysis, the stakes or consequences at each hotspot were measured as a sum of the levels or plot lines that get added or deducted from the experienced narrative.

The films were found to begin almost always with a few hotspots with as low as 0 and as high as 2 stakes. These hotspots did not affect the ultimate narrative by much. The number of such hotspots depends directly on the duration of the film in most cases. The purpose of these hotspots is to make the viewers feel connected and in control of the characters in the film. It evokes the feeling of relatability, making the viewers value their future choices more.

Screenplay

1 EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

LOW ANGLE WIDE - EXTREME CLOSE UP - WIDE

Gentle wind is blowing and the grass in the playground is slowly swaying with it. We hear rushing footsteps and SEHAJ (11) runs swiftly from behind the camera. PARTH (12) who is chasing Sehaj, is unable to keep up.

CUT TO

LOW ANGLE WIDE - MID - CLOSE UP

Sehaj runs past and Parth stops (left third) to breathe. He is panting heavily. ASMI (12) is also running from Parth.

PARTH
(Exhausted, as loud as he can)
Bhot time se meri hi den chal rhi hai
yaar! Koi toh pakde jao!

CLOSE UP

HOTSPOT 1

Sehaj stops, smirks and replies to him while panting.

Option 1

SEHAJ
(Mocking)
As you say sir. Aao, pakad lo.

Option 2

SEHAJ
(Playful and motivating)
Catch me if you can! Come on, its not
like magic, you just have to run fast.

CUT TO

WIDE

Parth is split between running after Sehaj and Asmi as they both run around him. He chooses to run after Sehaj as Asmi is faster than both and escapes his reach.

CUT TO

2.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - SLOW MOTION

Parth closes in on Sehaj and his fingers brush through her hair when suddenly, she escapes again.

CUT TO

WIDE

Sehaj runs towards a bench trying to flee.

PARTH
Ab kahan jayegi bhag ke!

WIDE - TWO SHOT

HOTSPOT 2

Option 1

Sehaj jumps over the bench. As a result, Parth abruptly stops as he is not confident in jumping over.

Option 2

Sehaj uses the bench to quickly change her direction. Parth not anticipating this, stops abruptly at the bench.

CUT TO

WIDE

Parth again changes his target to Asmi and starts running.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP

A ball comes rolling and reaches Sehaj's feet. She picks it up and throws it towards the children playing cricket nearby.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP - PROFILE

Sehaj gets distracted looking at the children playing cricket when suddenly Parth comes running towards her after losing the chase with Asmi. Sehaj looks at him and is startled.

3.

WIDE - TWO SHOT

HOTSPOT 3

Option 1

Sehaj jumps to get away from Parth

Option 2

Sehaj ducks to avoid Parth reaching for her.

Regardless of the choice, Sehaj is unable to get too far with her move and gets caught by Parth.

WIDE

Sehaj and Parth take a break and sit side by side on the grass, relaxing their legs and panting.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP - PROFILE

PARTH
(Panting)
Sight... finally.

CUT TO

WIDE - OTS SEHAJ

Parth and Asmi stand in front of Sehaj who is still sitting on the grass, taking a break.

PARTH
(Mocking)
HA-HA! I'm the fastest man alive!

ASMI
Come on, tu lucky tha bas. Literally
every other person is faster than you.

CUT TO

MID - PROFILE

4.

Sehaj gets up and starts walking towards Parth and Asmi.

SEHAJ
(Lightly panting)
Chalo ab bhaago, meri den hai.

Wide

HOTSPOT 4

Option 1

Sehaj chases after Parth.

Option 2

Sehaj chases after Asmi.

Regardless of the choice, Sehaaj begins to run after Asmi but as she is too fast for her, she changes her target to Parth.

SEHAJ
Asmi bhot fast hai, Ab toh bas tu hi
bacha. Kahan jayega...?

PARTH
Oh no!

CUT TO

EXTREME CLOSE UP

While running from Sehaaj, Parth steps over a cricket ball, slips and falls.

CUT TO

WIDE - HIGH ANGLE

Sehaj and Asmi come running after to help Parth. While Asmi kneels beside Parth, Sehaaj stands and observes.

ASMI
(Worried)
Parth! Kya hua!?

PARTH
(Mocking)
Hah! Tu mujhe abhi bhi nai pakad payi!

5.

I really am the fastest man alive!

WIDE - PROFILE

HOTSPOT 5

Option 1

Sehaj tags Parth as he is lying injured to get her revenge.

Option 2

Sehaj kneels to help Parth and touches her shoe.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP

PARTH
Oh no, looks like I'm tagged again...

ASMI
(Angry)
Kya hai Sehaaj! Usko chot lagi hai aur
tu abhi bhi bas game ke baare me soch
rhi hai!?

CUT TO

CLOSE UP - PROFILE

Sehaj looks down sadly about Asmi's remarks.

CUT TO

WIDE - OTS SEHAJ

Asmi helps Parth get up and supporting him, they start walking towards Parth's home.

MID - SEHAJ

HOTSPOT 6

Option 1

Sehaj decides to leave them, turn and head home. She walks

6.

away without looking back at both of them or saying a word.

FADE TO BLACK

Option 2

Sehaj walks up to them as they are leaving. She tries to give them an explanation.

SEHAJ
(Feeling guilty)
I'm sorry yaar, I didn't mean it aise.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP

ASMI
Tune puchha bhi nai usse ki kaisa hai.
Mai wahan se bhag ke yahan aa gyi aur
tu bas khadi thi.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP

Parth stands still with Asmi's support thinking about the situation, looking at Sehaj.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP

HOTSPOT 7

Option 1

Parth accepts her apology.

Option 2

Parth declines her apology.

2 INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

WIDE - TWO SHOT

FADE IN

7.

Asmi takes Parth while supporting him to his building and they proceed towards the staircase.

CONSEQUENCES

Ending 1 - Parth denies Sehaj's apology

Parth is in pain and Asmi cannot take him upstairs alone. They need another person to help support Parth.

PARTH
Asmi ruk, tu akele oopar nai leja
payegi. Ugh... bhot pain ho rha hai.
Sehaj hoti toh she could've helped.
When she said sorry, I think she
really meant it.

They are stranded there with Parth in pain till help arrives.

Ending 2 - Parth accepts Sehaj's apology

Sehaj and Asmi support Parth as they go upstairs.

PARTH
Thank you Sehaj. I know tu tab help
kar rhi thi, tag nai. Mai bas thoda sa
confuse ho gya tha. Vaise mazza aaya
aaj khel ke. Sath me oopar ja ke kuchh
achha sa khayenge.

Ending 3 - Sehaj walks away without apologising

Asmi supports Parth as they go upstairs.

PARTH
Chal Asmi, Sehaj ko ab se sath me nai
khilayenge. I'm not very sure ki vo
tab tag kar rhi thi ya help. But usne
kuchh clearly toh bataya nai, toh I
think she was guilty. Chal hum sath me
oopar ja ke kuchh achha sa khayenge.

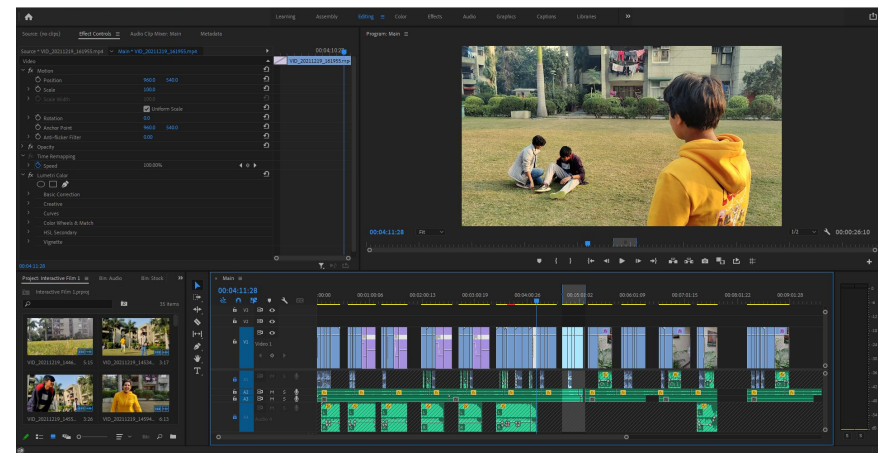
FADE TO BLACK

END

Production and Editing

The film was shot on phone due to resource constraints, with the aid of a mobile phone gimbal. Although an indoor shoot may have been simpler considering controlled lighting, an outdoor shoot was finally preferred to better prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

The narrative had to maintain consistency even after several hotspots considering multiple routes that the viewers could take, therefore continuity was of utmost importance. The film was shot keeping the editing process in mind, which included rendering multiple scenarios, often leading to the same conclusions to drive the plot in the intended direction.



Interactive Prototyping

After rendering out the several levels separately, the online video publishing service, YouTube was used for building an interactive prototype.

The features offered by YouTube like *Channel Card* and *End Screen Video Suggestions* were used to indicate upcoming hotspots and the available choices respectively. Since some of the features work better on certain devices only, Laptop/ PC is recommended for testing the prototype.

On the right are some stills of the hotspots from the interactive prototype and following is the link for the final film, available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzTSifaL8mc>



Conclusion and Future Prospect

Most of the children who watched the prototype enjoyed it and were looking forward to trying each and every consequence which would give them a better understanding of what to do and what not to do. More such interactive films can possibly be made and hosted on a platform better suited to interactive films or specifically designed for these interactive films.

As a compilation, aggregated at a single place, these interactive films could be paired with more games and activities to cover a vast part of the overall curriculum, expanding beyond just the subject of Moral Education.