How to Make a SciEx Video That Doesn't Suck

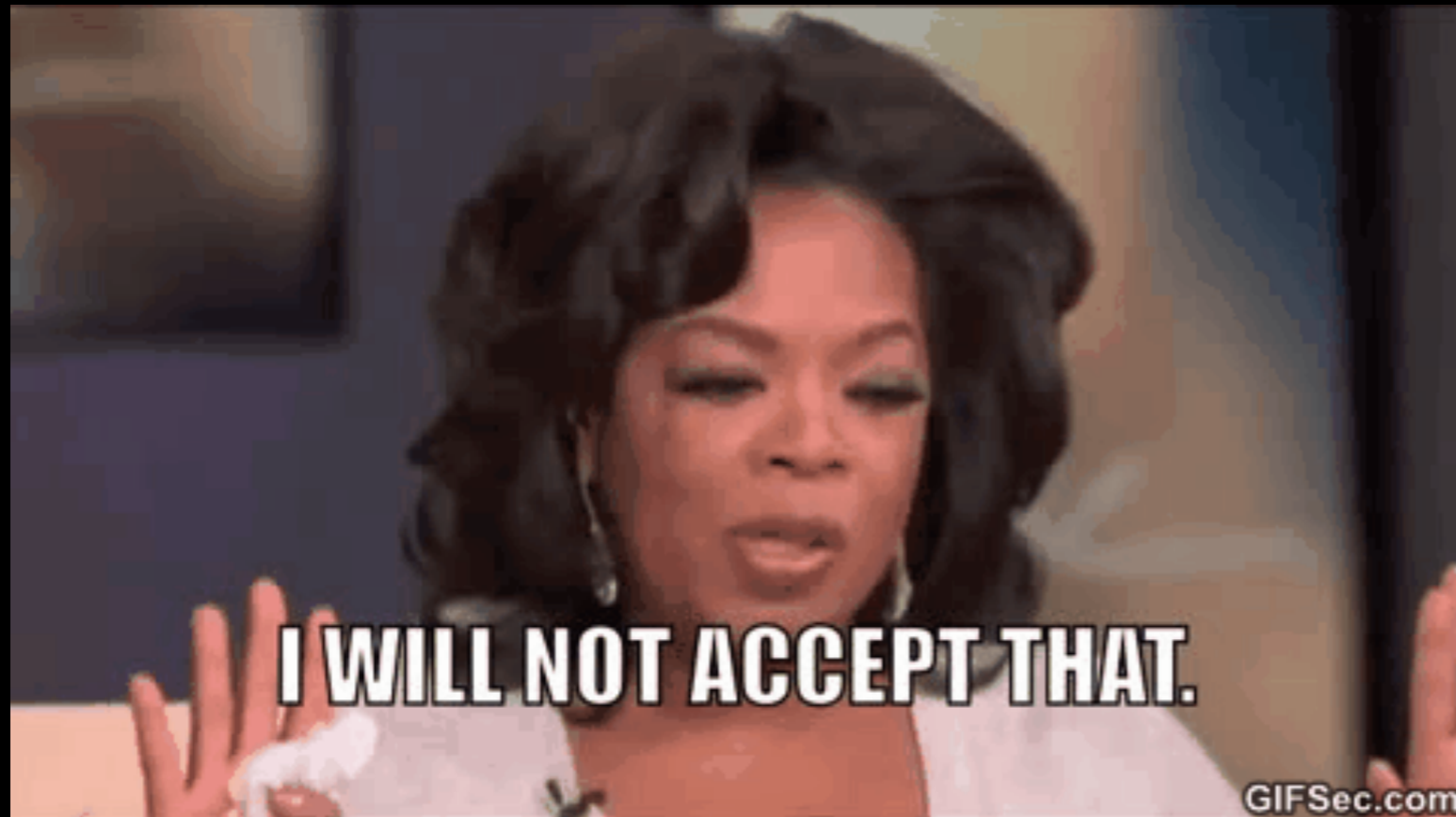## a practical primer by Elizabeth Choe

Science is already cool.
You don't need to make it cool.

You just need to not get in the way of its coolness.

Objective:

Create a 30-90 second video that shows people your world of science/tech/engineering/math and generates *curiosity* in the viewer.
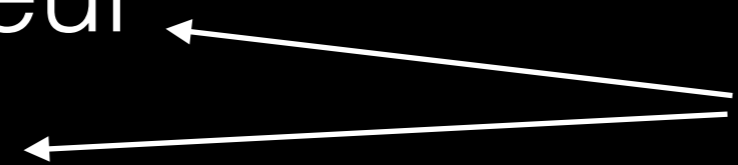
(What if it's it 91 seconds?)

But I need more than 1.5 minutes to get through my narrative!!!

We're here to spark curiosity. Think of this almost as a gif or a Vine. If you're relying solely on a story to make this interesting to a kid, your story is too long and your video probably isn't engaging enough.

Things that spark curiosity:

- Grandeur
- Humor
- Visual aesthetic
- Authenticity

Harder to pull off well

All good videos have:

- A point (even if there's no narrative)
- A reason to exist (i.e. why are you making a video out of this? Could it be better as an infographic? A blog post? A radio piece?)
- An intended audience

Grandeur (people's default when creating "inspirational" STEM videos)

What you need to pull it off: Serious production savviness (it's doable, even on a smaller scale).

Good: What My Mom Does at GE (works because narrative is simple and effects evoke sense of wonder)

Bad: The Personification of Engineering (most inspirational video contest entries default to this format, and it doesn't work because it doesn't have the production chops to overcome a generic, lackluster script/idea)

Risks: Can read sentimental, cheesy, n00b-like

Humor (people's default when creating videos for "kids")

What you need to pull it off: Good personality, quippy dialogue

Good: <u>Our Blades are F****** Great</u> (this was actually relatively low-budget, but the personality pulls it off)

Bad: <u>Ultimate Lab Safety</u> (you're laughing but for all the wrong reasons. The pacing of this video is painfully slow, making the humor read incredibly awkward.)

Risks: You could be subjecting your viewer to torture and seem incredibly out-of-touch with your audience

Visual aesthetic (the "extreme" science video)

What you need to pull it off: Something that is visually interesting, intentional point-of-view filming to make viewer feel like they're there, quick cuts, MUSIC

aaalmost **Good**: SciEx Submission - Team DRL (would've been much better as a 30 sec. video. After a minute of pure visual aesthetics, it just becomes a little gratuitous.)

Bad: Gopro parody - Be average (as a video, this is somewhat hilarious since it's a parody, but it illustrates a trap a lot of folks fall into)

Risks: Could end up being hilariously boring. (Using a GoPro doesn't automatically make something extreme!)

Authenticity (the "viral" video)

What you need to pull it off: Be yourself, snappy cuts

Good: Diet Coke and Mentos (makes it feel like you're there with the guys, doesn't have a corporate sheen)

Bad: Science of Persuasion (generic and trope-y - everyone does this style of "animation" now)

Risks: Could end up being hilariously boring, or worse, like EVERYONE ELSE.

Authenticity is more important than story, lighting, narrative (don't want to come across too desperate or trying too hard, as is often the case with humor-based videos).

Free Music and Images

Try to avoid using stock images, especially if you have access to awesome things to shoot.

Creative Commons - use music and images and footage that is under a CC license or under public domain. Always include citations of these materials in your video descriptions.

Other music options: purchase stock (~$40 per track), get permission from artist, have something made for your video