

SERIES

TEACHING FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

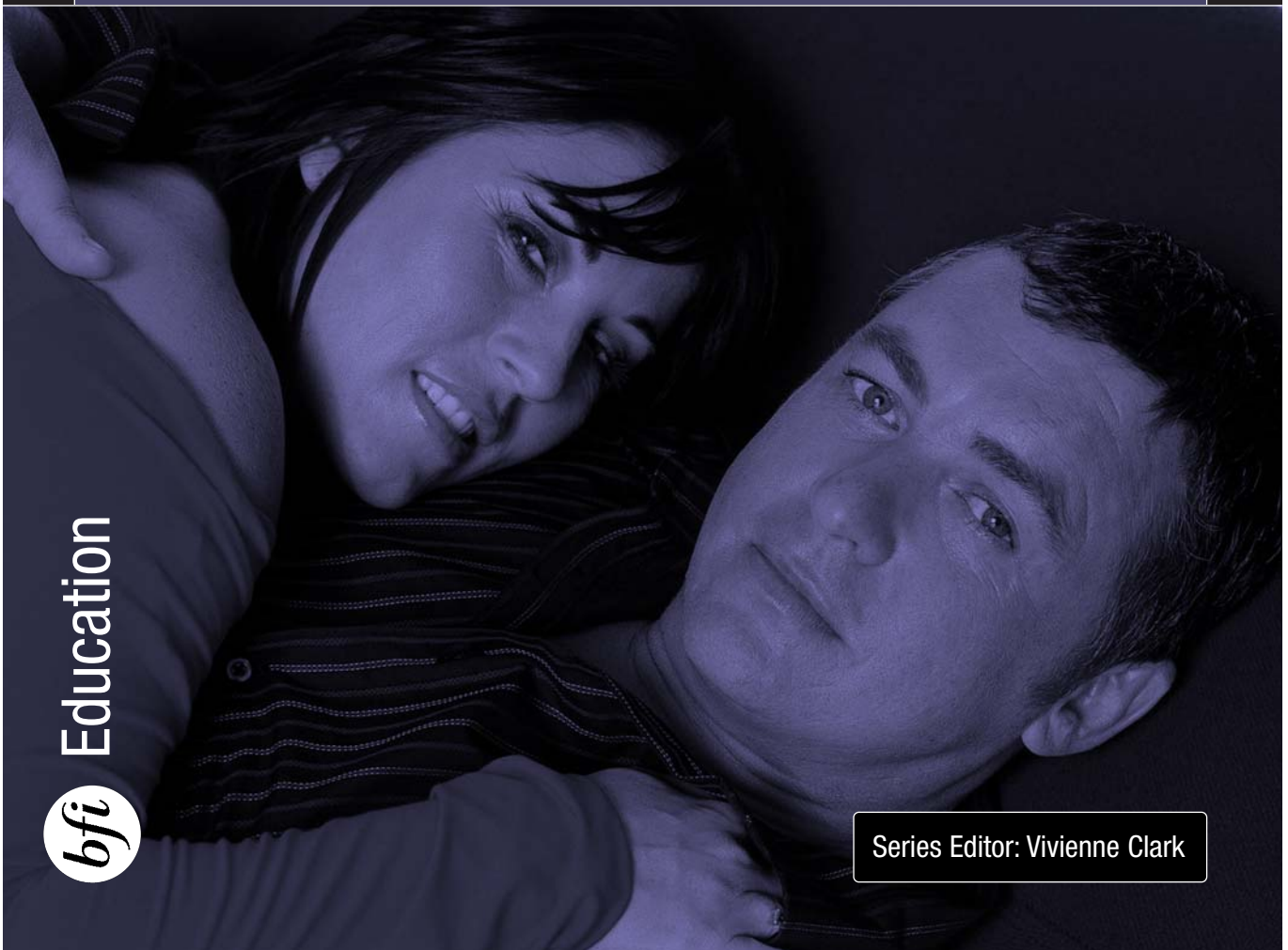
Teaching TV Soaps

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Education



Series Editor: Vivienne Clark



Production

Soaps are relatively easy and cheap to produce because they repeatedly use the same actors, locations, props and costumes. To keep up with audience demand, the production team works to a very tight schedule, often producing the programmes in blocks of eight or twelve.

The main problem in TV soaps is keeping the storylines believable and interesting. The production company employs a team of usually 10 or 12 writers to develop these.

Activity 1

Using a soap that you know well, as a group, imagine yourself on the team deciding what will happen next to the main characters.

- Write down how you think the storylines will develop over the next couple of months. You could present this by using a timeline, with different storylines underneath in a linear pattern.

Activity 2

Choose a member of the production team, such as the set designer or cameraperson. List the sorts of problems they might encounter while working on a soap.

Activity 3

Use cardboard boxes, etc, to make a model of an interior set from *EastEnders* or a significant set from another soap.

- Watch an episode of the soap which includes this set. Where are the cameras positioned during filming?
- Explain your model to the class.