

UNIT PLAN TOPIC: VIDEO/AUDIO PRODUCTION/STORY TELLING

LEARNING GOALS/PURPOSE: According to eSchool News, teaching students shoot, edit, and distribute videos provides them with skills for both academic and employment purposes. Virtually every child can now use cell phones to shoot videos as easily as they snap still photos and they attach these images to text messages and emails to friends and family every waking moment of the day. Learning to use well-edited videos to communicate more effectively empowers students to take charge of their learning and enables them to present what they have learned in a manner that is acceptable to teachers, peer groups, and employers. Learning these skills can also provide students the foundation for lucrative careers based on their ability to comprehend and utilize complex technologies to disseminate information to targeted audiences.

Because of their familiarity with video production equipment, and distribution sites like You Tube and Vimeo, some students grasp the fundamentals of shooting and editing quality videos very quickly. However, professional productions require many other skills the students have not yet mastered. Our students need to learn how to manipulate natural and artificial light to improve image quality. They need to learn how to use editing software to composite layers of video and audio to improve the technological aspects of production in a professional manner. And they need to write voice-over scripts and choose substantive sound-bites from effective interviews to hone the content of their messages for a specific audience. Beyond that, learning to create music tracks to set the mood of a production, or using special effects to enhance the originality of the video not helps stimulate student interest in the projects, but also enables them to take pride in the finished product because it will impress more than just their friends and family. There is nothing more satisfying than getting praise even from strangers for work well done. This emphasis in this unit plan is on video production, not on news writing, per se. If journalism students do not already have skills in writing news, features, and sport stories, for school newspapers and magazines then lesson plans for those skills should be added to this unit or taught in a separate unit. The lesson plans in this unit will teach students how to use video production equipment to apply their journalism and story telling skills effectively in packages for news, sports, features, or movie spoofs that might appear on the school web site or in a student produced newscast. Advanced students might also produce video advertisements, feature movies based on their own fictional characters, public service announcements (PSAs) for local non-profit organizations, and training or promotional videos for local companies.

NOTE: Redundancy will be evident in this unit below, and some of this will eventually be transferred to lesson plans.

WEEKS/DAYS NEEDED: This unit will allow beginning video producers to learn basic video shooting/editing skills over a period of five weeks, but they will be shooting and editing video by the end of their first week in class. Based on these sequenced lesson plans, most students should be able to plan, shoot, and edit a simple action sequence for an in-class presentation in ten days or less (estimate based on 50-minute periods). In some schools, lesson plans will take longer to execute because of the number of students in class, or because of limited access to cameras and editing equipment. While anyone can point and shoot a camera, few know how to shoot quality videos and edit their shots to communicate a story or sequence of events. This simple assignment might take three or four days for students to plan, coordinate, stage, shoot, and edit.

LESSON PLAN DESCRIPTIONS: Lesson plans for each of these skill areas may take from one day to four days to teach and practice. Learning to use cameras, getting usable audio, and applying effective lighting strategies may take one to two days per topic. Shooting videos usable for editing will probably require at least two to three days of planning, staging, and shooting. Editing a simple sequence from the raw video may take another two to three days. Teachers must be patient mentors during this learning process. After students learn basic skills, the entire production process for one project that runs a minute-and-a-half to three minutes long, could take up to four weeks. As students become more proficient, they will be able to shoot and edit news and sports stories in a matter of hours, provided they are working on their projects outside of class. Otherwise, class hours translates to multiple days or weeks for each project.

EQUIPMENT (This usually takes about three 50-minute class periods): Students will view training DVDs to learn about different types of cameras and get hands on practice using the school cameras. They will also learn how use different types of lighting strategies to ensure production of quality images. Finally, they will learn microphones and producing different tracks of audio for the editing process.

SHOOTING GOOD, EDITABLE VIDEO (This usually takes 3 to 4 days for each member of a four-person crew to shoot all the video needed to create a well edited short movie): After getting familiar with the equipment, students will work in groups of three or four to plan and shoot videos of very simple activities like two people throwing a ball, or two martial artists staging a fight, or two chess players engaged in a 30 second game – start to finish. The students may shoot a total of three or four minutes of raw video, using a variety of close-up, medium, and wide shots to record the activity from multiple angles. They will concentrate on framing shots using the rule of thirds, and staging scenes based on the 180-degree rule. They will shoot from tripods and commit to holding each shot at least 10 seconds. The raw video from these activities will then be used to edit short movies.

EDITING BASICS (This usually takes five to ten 50-minute class periods because of time constraints, equipment malfunctions, and the number of people working on different projects): Students will learn to import videos into their laptop or desktop computers, then begin assembling the different shots in sequences that communicate a short visual story about an activity. The focus here is on learning to edit on the action so viewers are not really conscious of the edits. Teams of three or four could edit three to four segments together like vignettes in a larger story.

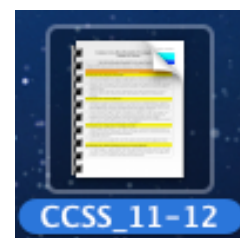
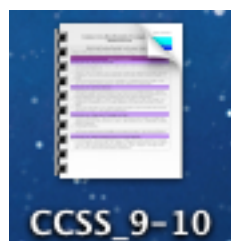
PRE-PRODUCTION PLAN – This a formal planning process in preparation for producing a project. It is very structured and it may take **one week** to teach, and about **one week** of student collaborative planning and practice to execute the first time. As journalists learn the process of developing news stories, this kind of planning will occur on the fly. However, students destined to become commercial producers, film-makers, or other kinds of entrepreneurs, will go through this process as professionals dealing with client demands.

PRODUCTION – LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION! The students will keep time logs and journal notes detailing their daily production roles and duties, basically justifying their time for a news director or for a paying client.

POST PRODUCTION LESSON PLANS – Scripting, planning the package (see pre-productions), lead and tag, importing raw video, sound tracks (Primary, Secondary tracks), video tracks (A, B roll), compositing layers of sound or video, choosing sound-bites, placing stand-ups and purpose, motivated editing of sequences for continuity, editing on the action. FX, music, transitions, chyron Names, titles, info-graphics,

DISTRIBUTION -- posting completed projects to the website, You tube, Tween News, Vimeo, DVDs (burn ‘em and sell ‘em), Wikis, Film festivals (\$3 admission, Christmas and May, on a Friday night), promoting with marketing posters, emails, Twitter, Facebook.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: Virtually all of the Career and College Readiness Standards for Language Arts grades 9-12 are applicable in a media production class. Individual lesson plans will focus on specific standards that will be described on the appropriate section for a particular plan. Rather than enumerate all the Common Core standards here, they are organized in two .pdf documents (Grades 9-10 and Grades 11-12), which are accessible on the class web site. The icons below become clickable links:



SUPPLIES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Mics/mic boom/cables and wireless
- Cameras
- SD cards or tape cassettes
- Tripods/stabalizers/dollies

- Light kits
- Edit stations
- Studio set
- Textbooks/handouts/Keynotes
- VideoMaker DVD training videos (cheap)

TEACHING METHODS:

- Mini lecture (15 minutes)
- Keynotes with video clips
- Training videos (VideoMaker)
- Hands-on Practice
- Guest speakers

- Textbooks/worksheets
- Binder Handouts
- Video Puzzles
- Film Review Discussions
- Student Technical Solutions

PRODUCTS:

- Videos, DVDs, etc
- Advertisements:
- Feature movies:

- Slide Shows:
- Radio Interviews:
- Journals, time logs, production forms, releases
- Other:

LOCATIONS:

- Studio (including green screen)
- Campus (labs, courtyards, stadium, etc)
- Off Campus (parks, etc., with parent permission slips and good academic standing)

<p>STUDENT SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES (beginner to adv):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice sessions/hands-on (10 pts each) • Types of shots (MCU, etc) (demos, practice, quizzes) (10) • Fire hosing vs tripods and stabilizers (intro penalty pts) • Shooting to edit sequences (planning ahead) (10) • Audio quality/types of mics (demos, practice, quizzes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate professional videos/news/movies (10 pts each) • Field trips (Local TV, newspapers, college media day) • Sports events (Learning horizons, following action) (10 pts) • Lighting techniques/lighting equipment/tone (demos, prac) • Begin shooting first projects (student bios are good)(100) • Music vids with lip synching (fun but challenging) (100)
<p>STUDENT PROJECTS (applied skills, beginner, intermediate, advanced):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All packaged productions are worth 50-100 points each • Assemblies/plays/debates (beginner) • Talent Shows/Student Council Mtgs (beginner to interm) • Parades/Floats/ (beginner to advanced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Yearbook (beginner to advanced) • Band, ROTC, Clubs, Rallies (beginner to advanced) • Competitions (Sponsored Categories) (intrm to adv) • Submit to or attend film festivals (Intrm to adv) • Teacher certification videos (wide lens shoot) (intrm-adv) • Newscasts (All aspects of the broadcast) (bg-adv)
<p>PRE-PRODUCTION APPROVAL (audience, academic standards, substance, time management on several levels, team roles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify audience/client (10 pts) ▪ Angle or news peg (topic and synopsis) (10 pts) ▪ community and school standards ▪ research source citations ▪ expert interviews and source signature ▪ length vs time constraints ▪ storyboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ crew and talent ▪ Talent release forms ▪ FX or Graphic Artists ▪ Music and copyright ▪ stock footage and stills ▪ copyrights, royalties, releases ▪ equipment needed ▪ production schedule ▪ budget analysis sheet based on pitch
<p>PRODUCTION PROCESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shot lists pre/planned and unplanned • Interview questions • Interviews/sound bites • Paraphrased interview • Signed release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover video/cutaways/inserts/B-roll • Script VO's, Standups, Nat Sound • Anchor lead and tag (teleprompter) • FX, Graphics Needed? • Dialogue/Standups, SOTs • Monitoring audio quality • Controlling lighting issues
<p>POST PRODUCTION PROCESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editing Software (iMovie, Premiere, Final Cut Pro) • Editing Process (uploads, FX, Transitions, Compositing video/audio tracks, etc) • Importing different video formats • Graphics (processes, information) • Crawls (scrolling text) • Bug logos (KFHS-TV, SyFy, AMC, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio Control Room • Music (Garage Band/Soundtrack Pro, Etc) • Video Package Length • Credits (Crew, talent, special thanks) • Opening Title • Chyron: Names and subtitles • Audio tracks and levels • Sharing the story (rendering, burning DVDs, uploads, etc)

<p>EVALUATION: Video production is a collaborated process that allows for formative and summative assessments, peer review, and self-evaluations throughout the whole process. As students become more competent producing visual stories, they become more discerning about the quality of their work, less self-conscious about identifying flaws, and more flexible about re-shooting, re-editing, and re-burning their projects before distribution for public consumption. The point values below are just suggested values and might change throughout the semester or with each project. Students' opinions are valuable in this process because it helps them determine what matters as they take charge of their learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-production approval process (total value) • audience/client (10 points) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • topics, synopsis (10 points) • storyboards (20) • production schedule (10) • budget breakdown (20) weekly participation timesheets (25 – 5 pts a day) • talent release forms (20 pts) • peer assessment (formative and final vid evals) (10 pts each) • teacher consultations (10 pts) • grading rubrics and other documents in binders (5 pts for each document to encourage organization and accountability) • final presentations (75 points)
<p>CELEBRATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION: The production process can be very long and arduous, so completion of projects should be celebrated. We have premiered feature movies for parents and peers, complete with popcorn and cokes, but there are many other outlets for student work. Each time someone sees their work and compliments them on the quality of the production, the students gain confidence and motivation to do something even better next time around.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air projects in the classroom for peer evaluations and to spot fixable flaws before actual distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload polished projects to Wiki, School Tube, Tween, Vimeo, Scorpion Media Web Site • Air videos at festivals and during assembly presentations or invitational screenings for parents, students, administrators, and other teachers. • Sales of DVDs, etc., helps raise funds for equipment and software purchases.