ELECTRONIC PROJECT: Video Option (V)

Before you begin your video planning work, you will complete a written assessment of at least 2 videos produced previously by students. We will do a similar class assessment of two or three so you will have an idea of the kinds of things to look for. For each video, address the issues and questions identified in the assignment below (assessments are due ________________).

VIDEO ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Choose at least 2 videos to review. A set of former student videos from which you can select will be available in the AV lab room (NR 19-B). Schedule a time slot (schedule outside the door of NR 19), then check out a key just as you would for the "talk" self critique.

1. Identify by name each of the videos you review.

2. For each, describe the general structure (skit, interviews, narrated, mix, how-to format, other, etc.), tone (serious, humorous, factual, fun, etc.), and theme of the video (was there any special approach or tone that tied together all the information?).

   Describe the technique or approach used as a "grabber" introduction and "grabber" conclusion. Were they effective? Why/why not?

   Did the video "flow" well and was it well organized? Why or why not?

3. Describe who you think was the video's target audience. Explain why.

4. Evaluate the video, paying particular attention to the flow and organization, filming techniques used, type of music, transitions and other special effects, and the way the verbal information is presented.

   First discuss all the effective things about the video. Then identify the weaknesses of the video. Then describe how you might "fix" or improve those functions.

   END OF VIDEO ASSESSMENT INFORMATION/INSTRUCTIONS

VIDEO PLANNING & PRODUCTION – General Process

Topic Selection:
After selecting a topic (based on a "need" for the information for your target organization) for the entire major project, you will research the topic and clarify the focus and purpose of the video portion. Remember that your topic should be one that can be effectively and/or best communicated via a video format rather than some other media. (See Professional Presentations for details.)

Planning;
Next you will script and storyboard your presentation IN DETAIL. (see examples in textbook and AARP Community Television booklet), including any interviews. This means you must do preliminary research and/or interviewing to find out basic information; then plan which information is most important and how you will ask for and/or present it during the taped interview. (Will the video be a demonstration? A narrative supported by visuals? A skit? A travel piece? Will you incorporate interviews, visits, vistas? The options are endless. Think about effectiveness and interest to the viewer rather than just what's most convenient to you as a videographer.) You will write the detailed narrative FIRST, then decide on the most appropriate visuals to support the message. After you have completed the general "design concept," you will decide on production details (such as specific graphics/visuals, use of sound and music, titles and subtitles, transitional techniques, credits, etc.).
The next step is actual filming:

- Before any narrative track is laid down or any filming done, you should **PRACTICE** (this helps reduce the number of "takes" you will need to do) . . . the acting, the narration, and the equipment operation.
- Scout the sites and scenes that you want to film **BEFORE** the filming date. Make sure they will be appropriate, that the right people will be available or activities in progress, that there is appropriate light and nearby electrical outlets (inside), that there is no external noise distraction, etc. **BEFORE** you film.
- Plan your filming schedule so that people (subjects, interviewees) will be available when you plan to film (and so that the camera is available when you plan to film). It is helpful to film segments in approximately the same order that various "clips" will appear in the completed video. This reduces time needed during the editing phase.

Finally, you will actually produce the video (edit, add titles/subtitles, add narrative and music, etc.) As with filming stages, be sure that you have practiced operating the editing equipment before you begin actually editing. Schedule **EARLY**; schedule several editing sessions. Remember that you have several things to do:

- possibly transfer raw footage to a different format (e.g., from VHS to DV (digital), from Hi-8 Beta to DV . . . depending on which system you choose to use);
- create a time-keyed log of your raw footage video;
- tape a "leader" onto your final video tape (or disk);
- film titles, subtitles, credits OR plan how you will create them on the editing equipment;
- edit all the video clip segments together; include transitional techniques (e.g., swipes), if desired;
- add narrative to the video;
- add music, sound effects, transitions and other special effects (including titles, credits, subtitles) to the video; and
- **edit your bloopers (optional...some groups enjoy doing this at the end).**

Depending on the structure of your video, you may choose to lay down the narrative before adding the video clips so you know how long each of the video clips should be. If you lay down the video clips first, be sure that video clip lengths match the time it will take to "speak" the individual segments. You will want the final text and visual images to match, with no long "dead" spaces.

When using the digital editing system (DV), order is not as critical because you can easily modify any of your tracks (audio or video or graphics).

**VIDEO PLANNING & PRODUCTION – Specific Assignment Components**

**PHASE II-V:** Your group will draft script and filming instructions, first for peer review; then you will revise and submit them for instructor critique (turn-around time is short, so plan ahead!)

**Script/Storyboard** of your video presentation . . . see text, *Professional Presentations*, AARP book and other resource materials for help. Remember that your video program, just as a talk, should have three major sections: the beginning or introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Titles, subtitles, credits, etc. can be used to help provide structure.

The script/storyboard should contain one 2-part column indicating time allocation [one for each segment, one for cumulative time], one column of **actual** text, including the content of all interviews (indicating who will be saying what and whether it is on or off camera), one column explaining what is happening visually (what you will film, including **how** you will film each segment--angle, zooms, pans, special composition techniques, etc.), and one column indicating music or other special effects.

See illustration on the next page for spreadsheet set-up.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DETAILED NARRATIVE</th>
<th>VISUAL ELEMENTS &amp; FILMING INSTR.</th>
<th>MUSIC, SPECIAL EFFECTS, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NOTE: Use Excel or other spreadsheet program for ease of developing clear storyboard and filming instructions. Set computer for "landscape" layout rather than "portrait" layout. Align within the rows of cells the elements that "go together" on the final video.

Using a spreadsheet probably is the easiest way to do this. Each time you change narrative blocks, or change a specific visual scene (even inserting a close-up clip within a wide angle clip of the same subject), you should use a separate line of cells in the spreadsheet. Specific text, music, sound effects, etc. that accompany each image should be aligned in corresponding cells in the spreadsheet. (For example, if you are producing a video collage in which you switch quickly from shot to shot to shot to provide an overview of programs or facilities, each different video clip should be entered in a separate cell. Text accompanying each of this clips should be aligned with the individual segments, even if they're just 3 or 4 seconds long.)

Remember: production and filming instructions (e.g., fade in/out; move to out-of-focus, wide angle, zoom, type of shot--close up, medium, far, over-the-shoulder, etc., music or sound effects, or other specific techniques) should also be included at appropriate places. Be specific with music selections, and indicate the type of "tone" or "mood" you are trying to create.

**NO MORE THAN 2 MINUTES OF YOUR VIDEO MAY BE INTERVIEWS.**

**PHASE III-V:**
Your group will revise both your overall planning document (turned in by _________________) and your storyboard/script and filming instructions (turned in by _________________).

Both of these should be completed PRIOR to your final production editing. If you choose to make additional changes or edits as you produce, you may do so (submit a list of major changes on the day you show your final video). However, information in these two revised products (PD plus storyboard) should enable anyone else to pick up the plan and storyboard, then film and produce your video.

Your group will produce your final video and complete a group video critique (see instructions) as well as individual self- and peer-critiques:

**Production:**
Your group will "show" your video to the rest of the class during the last class period (__________). Afterwards your group will discuss the planning and production processes (including bloopers, hang-ups and successes) with the rest of the class. Remember, you must complete written self- and peer-critiques for the project and your group.

**Group Critique of Video:**
After completing the video, your group will write an evaluation about the completed video -- what you think are the best and most effective parts (and WHY), and what you would do differently if you were to plan and produce the video again. See form for specific instructions.

**Self- and Peer-Critiques for Video Project:**
After completing the video, each group member will print enough critique sheets for each group member (including themselves), then complete one for each person in the group.
NOTE re GENERAL PLANNING AND PRODUCTION: In planning a video production, it is important that you do adequate research during the planning stages. This includes researching your topic, your audience, your client, and your "shoot sites." Get permission, as needed, ahead of time and schedule your preliminary and actual interviews well ahead of time. Being thorough during the planning phases will make the production process MUCH EASIER. Also, be SURE to allow yourselves enough time for re-shoots if needed, editing, and other production requirements. (Allow yourselves a margin of error. It is rare that production process goes exactly as planned.) Allow time to deal with "MURPHY."

NOTE re CAMERA CHECK-OUT: You and your video team should check out a camera and practice filming with it prior to checking it out for actual filming for your video. When your team checks out camera for the first time, you must get "checked out" on camera operation by one of the course instructors (by the same camera type that you plan to use for project). Prior to doing so:
- All members of your team must have completed the videotaping/newscast lab exercise
- Read relevant parts off the Course Reader/Workbook, AARP book, and course web site.
- Check out copy of the appropriate camera and editing equipment operation manuals (READ THEM)

Begin signing up for camera check-out EARLY in the semester (then plan accordingly).

NOTE re FILMING: When you film, be sure to use long leads (fades or stuff you don't need) in between needed segments so that you can edit smoothly. Also, do NOT leave any "blank" (totally untaped-on) segments on the video tape as you film.

NOTE re EDITING EQUIPMENT USE: You and your video team should sign up for a training session on the digital deck EARLY. Do NOT wait until it is time to actually edit your video. You will be stressed and probably limited with your time at the end of the semester. Make sure that one of the instructors can meet with you at that time to show you how to operate the equipment. Summary instructions as well as a full set of manuals and a tutorial CD are available for your use. Each team should sign up for a maximum of 6 hours of editing time before any team can sign up for additional hours. If you change times or cancel, be sure to change the sign-up sheets and call groups scheduled before and after you.

Begin signing up for editing equipment use EARLY in the semester (then plan and work accordingly).

NOTE re EDITING: Before you begin editing, you will need to INDEX your tape (play your raw footage tape on the editing deck and record the different film segments along with the counter location indicating where each segment is located on the tape. This will speed your editing process. Film in order as much as possible to reduce editing time.

Likewise, if you plan to use the digital editing equipment, raw footage taken on any other camera will need to be transferred to a digital tape. Teams may check out a digital tape for a $10 deposit and a JAZ disk for a $80 deposit (total of $90). Check will be returned when you return disks.

NOTE: For your video, part of what you will be critiqued on involves whether or not the content and format of your video helps you meet your objectives. The degree to which your video actually matches the elements described in your planning document (objectives, audience characteristics, setting, link to other elements of the information system, etc.) will be assessed.
EVALUATIONS:

- Peers will evaluate your group's script/filming instructions in class (Phase II-V).
- Peers will verbally evaluate your actual video during class.
- Your group will evaluate (in writing) your video production.
- Each group member will evaluate each group member's (including their own) participation and involvement in the project.
- Instructor will evaluate all phases of the video planning and production, including critiques.

**NOTE re Self, Peer and Group Critiques:** Make sure these evaluations are filled out completely and that each item is well justified. Points will be deducted for incomplete, inadequate critiques.

Criteria for evaluation will include:

PLANNING DOCUMENT (included in overall Major Project Planning Document)
Thoroughness, appropriateness, clarity, effectiveness at addressing all required items, neatness, consistency among elements

SCRIPT and FILMING INSTRUCTIONS
Detailed and complete narrative, identification of on-screen or off-screen narration, identification of person doing narrative.
Description of other audio information (be specific; include sources for music, sound effects; identify specific music selections used and the tone/mood attempting to achieve; etc.) and any other special effects
Detailed filming and editing instructions, including location, activity, filming instructions (e.g., pan, zoom, close-up, etc.), type of shots, etc.
Accurate, specific and appropriate (not too short, not too long) time allocation to various segments.

**NOTE re Scripting/Storyboarding:** The purpose of the scripting and storyboarding (including filming instructions) is to help you PLAN your video so that you can film appropriate footage (without a lot of "waste" time and footage) and to help with your editing. That is why the script/storyboards are due PRIOR to final production. Yes, you may decide to make some changes during final editing production in order to improve the video (THAT'S PERFECTLY OK...and EXPECTED). However, you are NOT to produce the video, then do a transcript of the final product. (Sort of defeats the purpose of planning, doesn't it?)

CONTENT OF VIDEO

**Introduction**
1. Does the introduction grab attention? What techniques (audio AND video) are used? Is introduction appropriate for selected audience and topic?
2. Is the topic clearly identified? Do you use a title?

**Body**
1. Is the message presented in an organized and logical fashion, with clear links between various points and segments? Are the transitions/linkages visual, auditory or both?
2. Is the video presentation smooth? Does it have continuity? Does it have smooth transitions?
3. Was the major point of the presentation easily identifiable?
4. Does the video hold the audience's interest? (appropriate for targeted audience?)
5. Does the video stay focused on the topic?
6. Is the narrative clear, linked, planned (rather than ad libbed)?
7. Do the visual components support and enhance the message?
8. Is there variety in the visual and audio components? Pace changes as appropriate?

**Conclusion**
1. Is there a definite conclusion? Does it link back to the introduction (or the main point)?
2. What techniques (audio AND video) are used to conclude the video? Is conclusion appropriate for selected audience and topic? Are any needed VIS links incorporated?
OTHER (both planning and production)
1. Do music, sound effects and other special elements support and enhance video?
2. Is there enough variety—in visual elements, in types of segments, in pace?
3. Does video avoid heavy reliance on interviews?
   (You may use NO MORE than 2 minutes of interview in your video.)
4. Is there sufficient verbal information included in the video?
5. Are segments of appropriate length (not too long, not too short) so they do not become boring, yet
   viewers have time to comprehend the content and images?
6. Are transitions between segments smooth, appropriate?
7. Is video appropriate for the targeted audience?
8. Does video provide information to meet needs of the stated objectives?
9. Is the video clearly linked with other elements of the VIS, as stated in the planning document?

ACTUAL PRODUCTION
QUALITY OF PRODUCTION
Narrator(s) (voice only):
• Grammar, articulation, enunciation, volume, pitch, verbal pacing, etc.
• "Match" between what is being said in the narrative and what is seen in the video

On-camera Speakers (with our limited equipment, it is best to limit on-camera speakers because often
the sound quality is not good; rely more heavily on narrative done in the editing room)
• Appearance, posture, mannerisms, eye contact with camera (or confederate), appropriate dress
• Interaction with props, other speakers, etc.
• Grammar, articulation, enunciation, volume, pitch, verbal pacing, grammar

Other visuals used (to include props as well as settings selected)
• Appropriateness, quality, variety

Filming
• Focus, lighting, clarity of images
• Exposure
• Transitional techniques (smooth? not filmed over other segments?)
• Use of form and color (e.g., is background supportive or distracting?)
• Quality composition of visual scenes (e.g., not lots of distractions or huge chunks of blank wall)

Other
• Creativity of presentation style, theme or concept carried throughout
• Use and blending of narrative, visuals, music and sound, transitions, special effects
• Use of titles/subtitles, credits

GROUP VIDEO CRITIQUE; SELF- AND PEER-CRITIQUES
Included?
Quality of comments, justification
Selected Video Project Topics from Previous Years

Minimum impact camping
Introduction to rock climbing
Orientation/safety film for laser tag (and disk golf)
Autumn activities at Uncle John's Cider Mill
Introduction to Potter Park Zoo for young children (another for Detroit Zoo)
Inexpensive "extracurricular activities" to do on MSU campus
Overview to services at Tamarack Rehab Center
Hartwick Pines State Park and Forest Management
Attracting Senior Citizens to Travel to Frankenmuth--Bavaria in Your Own Backyard
Introduction to PRTR Department and Faculty
Kung Fu/Tai Chi Club at MSU
2 Promotional program (for families) for Fitzgerald Park (another introducing frisbee golf)
Promotional program for Lansing's ALFA (Active Living for Adults) program for senior citizens
Promotional program for Lansing's ELRA's arts program
Awareness/promotional program for Lansing's River Trail
Explanatory "news story" about the traffic problems and redesign issues associated with Grand River Road in East Lansing
Production explaining the problems and consequences of drunk driving (targeted at high school and college students)
Promotional program (encouraging participation) for Special Olympics
General awareness program about logistical and attitudinal barriers/challenges for disabled persons
"At Home at MSU," a program for freshmen to discuss strategies for making MSU a smaller, more personal place, and how to make appropriate decisions
Informational program about different types of on-campus living options for MSU students
Issue program (targeted at MSU administration and East Lansing officials) about traffic and parking problems at MSU and in East Lansing
Explanation of apple cider making process for Uncle John's Cider Mill
Promotional program for Cristo Rey Center
Recruitment program for Big Brothers/Big Sisters program
Recruitment program for MSU Crew teams
Promotion for 4-H Children's Garden
Introduction to Bull Riding
Introduction to (camping, backpacking, canoeing, selecting outdoor recreation equipment/gear)
Recruitment of high school students to assist with installation of holiday lights at Potter Park Zoo
Promotion of ELRA programs for university students
Lansing Ice Arenas promotion; Harris Nature Center promotion
Getting Started in Mountain Biking