

【資料】

Further Developing the Video Production Course for the Global Communication Department

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グローバルコミュニケーション学科を対象とした
映像制作講座の更なる発展について

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1. Background

In the spring of 2018, the *Digital Research Skills* (DRS) course was introduced at Hiroshima Bunkyo University for the Global Communication Department students. Several updates to this video production course have been made since its introduction to address changes in enrollment, equipment availability, and access to the university's studio. Students are now given more detailed feedback on their creative projects through a single-point rubric, peer feedback, and one-on-one discussions with their teacher. Although these revisions have largely been successful, further updates are currently underway as several shortcomings in the students' production techniques have surfaced, as well as the need for project-specific rubrics.

2. Digital Research Skill in 2018

This course initially focused on developing the creative and technical skills for writing, shooting, and editing a *narrative*, *documentary*, and *public service announcement* (PSA) video. Students used English to discuss the thematic ideas in their scripts and to direct the actions of their crew and performers.

• Writing

For creative writing, students learned the traditional structure of narrative storytelling: setup, development, and resolution. In other words, a conflict is introduced to the main character, he or she attempts to overcome it, and this effort is either successful or not. In addition to clearly introducing the conflict from the start of their story, the students learned the four forms of conflict: self (internal), individual (external), society (social environment), and nature (physical environment). Students were strongly encouraged to write simple stories with well-defined conflict that is shown, not spoken. Additionally, they were encouraged to write about themes that they found meaningful and, when possible, draw upon personal experiences for inspiration.

- Shooting

Students learned how to manually operate one of the university's prosumer video cameras along with its tripod. During in-class technical workshops, students learned about lens focal lengths, camera angles and movements, and three-point lighting. Students also learned how the use of these techniques can serve the story, such as a *low angle shot* conveys power or a *close-up shot* emphasizes an important detail or emotion. These techniques were often introduced through the analysis of scenes from classic films. For example, the students viewed the *low angle shots* of Charles Foster Kane in "Citizen Kane" during his political rise to power and the closing *close-up shot* of his burning boyhood sled to reveal the meaning of "Rosebud," which represents his loss of innocence. The students also learned about recording production sound with a super-cardioid microphone to capture dialog for their final project. Along with problem solving and personal safety, a portion of the workshop covered equipment safety. With a limited amount of video equipment available, a malfunctioning camera would complicate the schedule. Following a technical workshop, the students briefly shot test video on campus and then shared the video files with their teacher who would review them during the following lesson and discuss their technical strengths and weaknesses. Taking two lessons to complete, this time-consuming process would often interfere with the course schedule.

- Editing

The students learned how to assemble their video footage in Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 on the desktop computer located in the university's studio. They practiced basic editing techniques on this nonlinear professional video editing software, such as applying cuts, transitions, and text to their shots. Beyond learning how to make edits, the students learned the reasons why they should apply them. For example, the use of dissolve transitions are often used by the filmmaker to show a character's inner thoughts or to show the passage of time in the story. The students also learned how to adjust shot exposure and color temperature to help them match individual shots more seamlessly or to create an effect. As their abilities progressed, more advanced editing techniques were introduced. This included selecting camera shots, angles, and movements to support the story, cutting on action, and holding on a shot or trimming it to create a natural rhythm within the sequence. Students also learned about using background music and sound effects to help them tell their story, especially when they have limited shooting locations. For example, inserting the sound effect of car horns will give the impression of heavy traffic without the viewer seeing it. Finally, the students learned how to mix the audio levels of the background music, background ambience, sound effects, and dialog, so they sound balanced in their final cut.

- Video Projects

Every five weeks in this 15-week course, the students produced a video project. With each completed cycle of a project's pre-production, production, and post-production, students were introduced to more complex aspects of videomaking. For the first project, the students each produced their own narrative short film without dialog with a running time of five minutes or less. For project two, the students worked together to jointly produce their choice of a documentary or a PSA video of five minutes or less that includes on-screen text for titles and statistical

information. For their final project, the students solely produced their choice of a narrative, documentary, or PSA video with an increased running time of five minutes or more. Additionally, this final video needed to have at least one line of production dialog. Once the students completed the editing of a project, the teacher copied the files from the computer and viewed them with the students during a lesson. After viewing the video twice, the teacher made some general comments on its theme and production. For the following lesson, the teacher shared more detailed feedback with the students on the strengths of their videomaking skills, as well as suggested improvements for their next project. Some of these suggestions included writing a story with more defined conflict, shooting more coverage, and editing shots without continuity errors. The DRS teacher found it difficult to assign a grade for subjective artwork, so a holistic rubric was used based on the amount of effort that students put into each stage of production and the overall impression of their submissions.

In 2018, the two students who were enrolled in this course had access to a single camera, tripod, microphone, lighting kit, and computer with editing software. This limited amount of equipment meant its usage had to be precisely scheduled to avoid any time conflicts. Additionally, teachers of other Bunkyo courses had access to the same camera, so the DRS students could not freely shoot their videos despite the small size of the class. Furthermore, the teacher recognized by the end of the semester that the amount of technical information shared was too great for the students to fully absorb, so several updates were made the following year. The required running time of their submitted projects was shortened to more manageable lengths, learning how to capture production audio with an external microphone and making it a requirement for video project three were removed from the lessons, and documentary videos as an acceptable project submission was no longer offered. From this point forward, the students would only learn about producing narrative short films and PSA videos.

3. Digital Research Skills in 2022

Since the introduction of the Digital Research Skills course, several more updates became necessary in 2022 when enrollment increased to 10 students. Considering the many scheduling complications that previously occurred with only two students, the available equipment for shooting and editing video would no longer be sufficient.

- Writing

The process of creative writing for a video was unaffected by the increased enrollment. The students learned about the different forms of conflict and the stages of narrative storytelling, followed by writing their own ideas on paper or their iPad tablet.

- Shooting

As each student at Hiroshima Bunkyo University is assigned an iPad for their coursework, the teacher of the DRS course decided to switch from shooting on a traditional video camera to shooting with an iPad. This change had immediate benefits with the most significant being the

free access students had to shooting. Not only did this allow the students to shoot at any time, but they could also leave campus to shoot without checking with their teacher or carrying around bulky equipment. In other words, the students could shoot more footage in a variety of locations, thus creating more possibilities in their storytelling.

Another gained benefit was time. No longer did technical workshops for shooting video extend to two lessons. Rather, the students would receive a shot list from their teacher during a lesson, leave the classroom to shoot the assigned shots, return to the classroom, and airdrop the video clips to the teacher all within 20 minutes. Next, the teacher would project the shots and view them together as a whole class. The immediacy of this playback allowed the teacher to quickly address any misunderstandings that occurred during the workshop. Additionally, if a student failed to properly frame a shot, the teacher could effortlessly correct during its playback. For example, if a shot is too wide, the teacher can drag their two fingers away from each other on the iPad to zoom the shot in and, if necessary, reposition the shot for proper framing by simply dragging their finger on the zoomed image.

- Editing

As with shooting video, editing on the iPad eliminated all scheduling issues that previously existed when students used the editing software on the university's desktop computer. Before entering the DRS course, the students already have the iMovie editing app installed onto their iPad and have some basic experience in using it for other Bunkyo courses. Using this app gives the students the freedom to edit at any time and any place, as well as giving them more time to finalize their cut. Additionally, the simplicity of performing edits in iMovie, in comparison to Adobe Premiere Pro, would allow for fewer technical hurdles in completing a video project. As with shooting video, the time needed for the editing technical workshops became shorter. This extra time allowed the teacher to address any reoccurring shortcomings in the students' writing, shooting, or editing.

- Video Projects

After completing a video project on the iPad, the students simply airdropped it to their teacher as they entered the classroom, eliminating the time it takes to locate and transfer the file from the desktop computer to a USB flash drive, so it can be projected from a laptop computer or a media player. With this streamlined process of shooting, editing, and viewing, the teacher used the gained time to introduce a peer feedback form for the students to fill out during the lesson after viewing all the video projects. Through this activity, the students shared their opinions about the videos with the best writing, shooting, and editing, as well as the video that is best overall (see Appendix A). The teacher encouraged the students to provide specific reasons for their opinions with supportive examples. At the start of the following lesson, the teacher shared this feedback with the students by tallying the votes and summarizing the comments for each video without revealing the identity of the classmates who made these comments. With four different categories, each film usually received one or more votes with some form of positive feedback about its production. This appeared to be an encouraging experience for all students, which

hopefully motivated them to make improvements to their following project.

To help students be more aware of all the technical details that go into making a video, the teacher also introduced a single-point rubric in place of the holistic one (see Appendix B). Divided into the three sections of video production, the students can know the exact strengths and weaknesses of their writing, shooting, and editing. Additionally, while the students were occupied with brainstorming and writing the script for their next project, the teacher called up one student at a time, so they could review and discuss these production strengths and weaknesses together. This was an excellent opportunity for the teacher to clarify each student's understanding of any technical aspects of the videomaking that fell short during its production, while also giving praise for aspects that were performed well. This one-on-one approach was also effective for any students who felt reluctant to voice their confusion in front of the class.

4. Overall Reflection

Although the use of an iPad has successfully eliminated many logistical hurdles in the shooting and editing of a video, new concerns have emerged. With a student's unlimited access to the video production equipment, the time and care that goes into a creative project seems to have lowered from this convenience. There was obviously a lack of coverage shot by students, resulting in the overuse of *wide shots* with many unsightly *jump cuts* in the editing. Furthermore, videos produced on an iPad do not have same aesthetic as a prosumer video camera. Besides shooting at a frame rate of 30 frames per second instead of the cinematic rate of 24, the students shot their videos handheld instead of using a tripod, further giving their projects an amateurish look. In terms of editing on iMovie, if students did not carefully deselect many of the automated features, inappropriate transitions and effects were applied to the video shots and generated text. Furthermore, with many automated features available in iMovie, several students could not hold back the temptation of using inappropriate lens filters, despite receiving instruction not to select them. Additionally, in several of the videos produced by the students, the main character looks directly into the lens and acknowledges the audience, also known as *breaking the fourth wall*. In narrative storytelling, this is almost always avoided because it immediately ruins the viewer's *suspension of disbelief*. In other word, the viewers are reminded that what they are watching is not real. Also, videos with added sound effects were often pronounced and, at times, inappropriately used to generate humor, rather than subtly supporting the on-screen action and the overall storytelling. Finally, and most importantly, several iPad-produced projects simply lacked well-defined storytelling, meaning the videos did not clearly show the main character experiencing conflict, trying to overcome the conflict, and being successful or unsuccessful by the end of the story. Considering that every student uses a smart phone and presumably watches social media video clips regularly, it is possible that these non-narrative clips with little to no cinematic value have negatively influenced their approach to videomaking in the DRS course. By shooting video on a touch-screen device, rather than a proper video camera, the student may be taking a more casual approach to their projects.

5. Looking Forward

Several changes to the DRS course will be made in 2023 to overcome these new concerns of shooting on an iPad. As an introduction to capturing video, a photography-based activity will be shared, so greater attention can be placed on the composition of a static image. To help give the projects a more aesthetically pleasing look, iPad tripods will be purchased for the course, and the students will be required to shoot and edit their videos at 24 frames per second. The teacher will also strictly enforce narrative storytelling and proper shooting and editing techniques to encourage the students to take on a more disciplined approach to their productions. Furthermore, more emphasis will be placed on selecting supportive background music as a requirement and unobtrusive background ambience as an option, while the usage of sound effects will be completely avoided unless the teacher recognizes a specific need for them in a student's script. Finally, a single-point rubric will specifically be made for each of the three video projects, instead of the current one that is applied to all three. This will allow the teacher to provide specific feedback based on the requirements of the project, whether it is a narrative film or a PSA video.

Although the students will continue to work with non-professional equipment in the DRS course, more emphasis will be placed on narrative storytelling with clearly defined conflict, effective camera placement in well-lit locations, and the arrangement of shots to tell a cohesive story. With a stronger foundation in the basics, accomplished students will be able to apply their newly acquired skills to more advanced productions if they choose to further explore filmmaking after successfully completing the DRS course.

Appendix A
Peer Feedback Form



Digital Research Skills: lesson CLASSWORK

Video Project #1 – Narrative Short Film

- a) Watch the videos made by your classmates
- b) Answer the questions below
- c) Share your answers with your teacher

Name:

Date:

Do NOT write about your own film:

| |
|---|
| 1. In your opinion, which student made a film with the best writing? Why? |
| |
| 2. In your opinion, which student made a film with the best shooting? Why? |
| |
| 3. In your opinion, which student made a film with the best editing? Why? |
| |
| 4. In your opinion, which student made the best (overall) film? Why? |
| |

Appendix B

Single-Point Rubric

DRS: video project #1 – feedback

1 = standard not met 2 = standard partially met **3 = standard met** 4 = exceeds expectations

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

WRITING



| Criteria (or Standard) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Feedback |
|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Story clearly has 3 parts: I. Introduce a problem II. Try to fix problem III. Successful or not (Optional: surprise ending) | | | | | |
| Easy to understand / Simple story | | | | | |
| Actors don't speak (problem is shown, not spoken) | | | | | |
| Interesting / Creative story | | | | | |

SHOOTING



| Criteria (or Standard) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Feedback |
|--|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Shoot video at 1080p | | | | | |
| Variety of camera shots: WS, MS, CU (optional: EWS, ECU) | | | | | |
| Variety of camera movements: Static, pan, tilt (optional: tracking) | | | | | |
| Smooth shots (-not shaky) | | | | | |
| No photographs (-only video shots) | | | | | |
| All horizontal shots (-no vertical shots) | | | | | |
| Shots have enough light | | | | | |
| Can see main actor's face enough | | | | | |
| Realistic acting (-no overacting) | | | | | |
| Actor doesn't look at the camera | | | | | |
| Interesting / Creative camera shots & movements (that match the story) | | | | | |

EDITING



| Criteria (or Standard) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Feedback |
|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| SOUND EDITS: | | | | | |
| Appropriate music (with no singing) (optional: sound effects & background sound) | | | | | |
| Fade in / Fade out | | | | | |
| Appropriate volume | | | | | |
| Deleted original sound from video shots | | | | | |
| Match the story / shooting | | | | | |
| VIDEO EDITS: | | | | | |
| No dissolves / No effects / No "Ken Burns" | | | | | |
| Actor(s) transition in / out of some shots | | | | | |
| Shots match well with each other (-smooth editing) | | | | | |
| Appropriate length of time (1-3 min) | | | | | |
| Match the story / shooting | | | | | |
| Save video at 1080p (after shooting in 1080p) | | | | | |

—2023年 1 月31日 受理—