Digitally Networked Media Production

On Thursday, April 30, 2020, 22 members of the UMN teaching community convened to discuss pedagogical challenges, adaptations, and ideas for teaching audio and video production virtually. Effective practices and resources generated during that discussion are documented here. Contact cei@umn.edu to suggest an addition to this resource.

Session Recording
- YouTube video of the session

Facilitators and panelists:
- Mark Pedelty, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities
- Kate Martin, Center for Educational Innovation
- Dawn Schot Klotzbach, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities
- Lisa Hutchinson, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities
- Elja Roy, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities
- Rebecca Jurisz, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities

Core principles for media production in virtual courses
- **Equity and access** - Recognize and address the fact that doing media production without access to campus-based production equipment, computers and software, and reliable, high-speed internet exacerbates inequalities among learners. Survey your students about their access to resources needed to meet course goals. Provide reassurance, resources and equivalent learning options for all students.
- **Flexibility and student agency in assignments** - Mitigate resource inequities by providing flexible options (i.e., simple to advanced tech, varied ways to meet assignment objectives). Having students choose or propose what and how their project will meet course learning objectives can promote self-efficacy and creativity.
- **Supporting students individually and on team projects** - Connect students with campus support resources (and each other) for individual tech help to manage the demands on your time as an instructor. Collaboration in virtual remains important. Be even more intentional about supporting groups working on joint projects virtually.

Supporting students

**Address equity and access by finding out what students have and connecting them with what they need**

Be aware that students learning at home are relying on their own resources which vary greatly. Some don’t have a computer or one with sufficient power or software to complete media rich
course assignments. By surveying all students about this before the course begins and
designing your course and assignments with this reality in mind, you can reassure all learners
that you’ve got their back and have designed the course so that all students can meet the
learning goals with the resources available to them.

- **Have a syllabus statement** about the ways you have designed the course to support
  student success and address access to resources.
- **Survey students** prior to the first day of the course about their access to materials.
  - Include a preamble that reassures students about your intent to use the
    information to provide support, flexibility, and where possible, to provide loaner
    equipment ([survey example](#)).
- **Connect students with loaner equipment**
  - Your campus Office of Information Technology or campus/collegiate academic
    technology support team may have laptops available to lend students.
  - Tap alumni networks and [U-CAN](#), the University of Minnesota COVID Action
    Network, to ask for equipment and computer donations or loans for students in
    your courses.

**Supporting individual students and teams**

In face-to-face classes, instructors may walk the room to provide learners with feedback and
hands-on tech support. They also monitor and manage groups who are collaborating on media
projects. To provide these two kinds of support to your learners in a virtual course, build in
some ways for students to get individual support and better team functioning that don’t
overextend your instructional capacity.

- **Direct students to campus or college support for media production consultations**
  - Crookston: Media Services | John Normandin jnorm@crk.umn.edu
  - Duluth: mmmedia@d.umn.edu consultations & equipment lending
  - Morris: Pam Gades | pam@morris.umn.edu
  - Rochester: Kim Sin | sinxx007@r.umn.edu
  - Twin Cities: SMART Media Services; Continuing and Professional Studies | Greg
    Steinke stein995@umn.edu; Liberal Arts | latis@umn.edu
- **Set up drop-in office hours for tech support** once a week (more when students are
  tackling a new tool, software, or skill)
  - These can be topical (e.g. Editing Drop-in) or completely open
- **Set up student “help teams”**
  - Take advantage of student expertise while building more community among
    students in your courses. These help teams serve like a student study group or
    peer-assisted learning group, where members go to one another for certain kinds
    of assistance (that you specify). Consider integrating the practice, “Ask three,
    then me,” where students ask three classmates for certain kinds of help or
    information prior to contacting you, the instructor.
• Monitoring and managing student teams for group projects
  ○ CEI assembled this curated set of resources Trouble-shooting group/team projects during the spring semester 2020 quick move to remote instruction.

Scaffolding the learning

To support learning and maintain student engagement, divide media production assignments into smaller parts that build toward the final product. Feedback to students at each stage is important, and can come from you, their peers, the students themselves using a rubric or set of established criteria or perhaps community partners.

• Share examples from previous students for each stage of the assignment. Use examples that reflect good use of a variety of production resources.
• Provide rubrics for self-, peer- or community partner critiques
  ○ Consider using the video commenting tool, VideoAnt, in which reviewers can insert comments at specific time codes.

Assignment adaptations

For video assignments

• Use phone features and find apps that convert phones into effective recording devices. (Voice Record Pro Demo | FilMiC Pro Demo | SWEFF FiLMiC Basics shared by Wally Swanson)
• Use Animatic to have students edit together their storyboards. If students’ drawing is a limitation, students can use stock images from the University’s stock content library or take photos and edit the stills.
  ○ Example: Grand Budapest Hotel Animatic YouTube video
  ○ Making an Animatic slide deck shared by Adam Carriga, LATIS, College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities
• Promote student agency to produce what they would like, such as 1-2 minute videos using basic production criteria and whatever tech is available on their own or with others.
  ○ Assign advertising parodies where students can focus on the pandemic if they wish (Shared by Rebecca Jurisz | Assignment | Student example 1 | Student example 2 | Student Example 3)
  ○ Shoot in selfie mode (Student video example shared by Elja Roy)
  ○ Students choose existing PSA for a cause they feel strongly about. This becomes their “client” for whom they complete a research analysis, production design proposal, script, storyboard, and sound design. Students determined equipment, tools, software resources they could use. After rough edits, the class did critiques. After final products were complete, students wrote reflection papers about their role. (Shared by Lisa Hutchinson | Assignment)
Consider digital storytelling for research assignments that also build visual literacy, storytelling, and media production skills.
  ○ Open Textbook by UMN's Linda Buturian: The Changing Story: Digital stories that participate in transforming teaching and learning
  ○ Digital Story Video Media Production Support Guide for Twin Cities students, faculty, and staff

For audio assignments

Consider podcasting assignments if learning outcomes for your course aren’t linked to video-specific media production.
  ○ Digitally Networked Field Experience Course YouTube video created by Mark Pedelty (with community partner Karl Demer at Atomic K Studios)
  ○ Guide to Producing Audio for students doing podcast assignments shared by Greg Steinke, College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities

Session resources

Campus support for instructors and students doing media production assignments
  ○ Crookston: Media Services | John Normandin jnorm@crk.umn.edu
  ○ Duluth: mmedia@d.umn.edu consultations & equipment lending
  ○ Morris: Pam Gades | pam@morris.umn.edu
  ○ Rochester: Kim Sin | sinxx007@r.umn.edu
  ○ Twin Cities: SMART Media Services consultations & equipment lending; Continuing and Professional Studies | Greg Steinke stein995@umn.edu; Liberal Arts | latis@umn.edu
  ○ Facebook Group: Teaching Film, Media, Screenwriting & Production Online
  ○ Lionsgate Motion Picture Group Safety Guidelines 2020-21
  ○ LinkedIn Learning is a library of online training videos available at no cost to current University of Minnesota students, faculty, and staff on all campuses.
  ○ Coursera online courses available to all University of Minnesota instructors, students, and staff at no cost through July 31, 2020.