

Digital Commons: Instructor's Guide

to Designing and Implementing a Digital Media Activity for the Classroom



Overview

The purpose of this guide is to help you design effective instruction which incorporates digital media. It will help you develop activities that avoid many of the pitfalls that can make these projects frustrating for you and your students. Digital media projects should be educationally sound and motivating for your students.

Implementing a Digital Media Project

This section will give you some basic practical advice on the logistics of implementing your project.

Time requirements

For every minute of a completed project, several minutes will be required for production. These times include all relevant tasks from planning to publishing:

Project Type	Time Requirement (low- to high-end)	
	3-5 minute Video: Interview/Informal (minimal post-production)	60 mins
3-5 minutes Video: Remix/Mash-up	60 mins	3 hours
3-5 minutes Video: Creative/High-production (special effects, green screen, field production)	4 hours	20 hours
10-12 minutes Podcast: Interview/Informal (minimal post-production)	30 mins	2 hours
10-12 Podcast: Creative/High-production	1 hour	3 hours

Mid-Project Deliverables

Some steps in audio and video production, such as file compression, take a certain fixed amount of time. Requiring students to produce deliverables throughout their project will mitigate situations where it is impossible to complete the necessary work by a deadline. More importantly, it will improve the ratio of student time spent learning vs. other supporting tasks. Examples of deliverables are listed below. At least 1-2 of these should be required for all projects:

Deliverable	Description	Time Due
Outline¹	Key concepts, overall vision or approach, cast and roles, 3rd-party media needed	Early. Before any production.
Script¹	Dialogue, listed by speaker. Can be rough (talking points) or verbose (to be read directly).	25% into project timeframe
Storyboard²	Sequential list of shots, sketches, direction.	25-50% into project timeframe
Rough Cut¹	Unedited audio/video.	75% into project timeframe

¹applies to either video or audio ²applies primarily to video

A web-based version of this document can be found at:
<http://digitalcommons.psu.edu/instructorguide>

This includes more detailed information, additional rubrics, case studies, and a library of tutorials.

Best Practices

There are a few basic guidelines that have a place in every project you assign and will vastly improve your chances of success.

1. Talk to a Digital Commons consultant early or before the semester.

We can help you design your activity, and we'll be better prepared to help your students if we understand their needs.

2. Assign short, do-able projects.

A good rule-of-thumb is that final videos should be 3-5 minutes long, and podcasts should be at most 10-12 minutes.

3. Assign group projects.

Media authoring involves multiple roles that often work simultaneously. Working in teams will improve the overall quality of outcomes.

4. Require mid-project deliverables (outlines, storyboards, etc).

Audio and video production is very feasible with a little upfront planning. Last-minute work is usually of very poor quality, if it's finished on-time at all.

5. Decide on publishing formats early on.

Will students be posting their work to their Penn State Blog, iTunes U, or YouTube? Or will they be burning it to a DVD?

6. Provide information on copyright and Fair Use.

Students can't put their work online or use it in their ePortfolio if they're appropriating 3rd-party media illegally.

Sample Video Project Timeline

Week	Task
	Meet with DC consultant early or prior to the semester to discuss project and schedule in-class workshop
1	Introduce project to students
2	Student team formation
3	In-Class workshop with DC consultant
4	Outline due
5	Storyboard due
6	Production begins
9	Rough cut due
13	Video completed and published to PSU blog
14	Peer video critique (as blog comments) due

Instructional Strategies

It is important to match the design of your activity with the level of thinking you hope to achieve from your students. Assigning a project that is either too complex or too simple may not yield the learning outcomes you expect. The following chart provides some basic examples that match to a range of target thinking skills.

	Thinking Skill Level	Description	Examples
Higher-Order Thinking	Creating	Putting together ideas or elements to develop an original idea or engage in creative thinking	Short Videos or Podcasts Choose an overarching theme and tie in several course concepts to demonstrate understanding of interrelationships between concepts and the ability to transfer knowledge to new situations. Remixing Appropriating 3rd-party media (as Fair Use) to create an original work.
	Evaluating	Judging the value of ideas, materials and methods by developing and applying standards and criteria	Critique via blogs Post videos or podcasts to a blog and elicit discussion around that media as blog comments. Provide a list of required elements to include in comments.
	Analyzing	Breaking information down into its component elements	Video Analysis Create a gallery of video clips illustrating a concept (ex. moments in a news broadcast which illustrate persuasive rhetoric).
Lower-Order Thinking	Applying	Using strategies, concepts, principles and theories in new situations	Podcast Interviews Identify experts, craft questions, and conduct in-the-field interviews. Simulations Role Playing Presenting Produce a video presentation formally illustrating key concepts.
	Understanding	Explaining ideas or concepts. Understanding of given information.	Reflection Podcast Provide verbal feedback or interpretation on a topic to demonstrate basic understanding. Video Annotating Comment on existing media using various audio/video annotating tools.

Assessment

You should allocate a few points in your grading for organization, production value, and communication of message. The bulk of the points should be applied to the quality of content. Something like production value may not seem important, but attention to details will keep students focused and will improve learning outcomes.

Criteria	Scoring Guide
Production Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lighting editing compositing, effects, etc. sound 	5 - Excellent editing, lighting, etc. 3 - Shows understanding of quality production 1 - Poor picture quality, sloppy, etc.
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of deliverables 	5 - Completed documentation (outline, storyboards) that clearly established plan for project. 3 - Completed documentation, but it did not contribute significantly to plan for project. 1 - Did not turn in all deliverables.
Message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established Purpose Vocal, written, or visual expression of purpose 	5 - Establishes message and communicates purpose clearly 3 - Message is present but confusing or disorganized 1 - Unclear what this video is trying to communicate

Getting Help

Options

Digital Commons consultants can help you in several ways, depending on your needs:

- **Face-to-face consultations.** Just schedule an appointment.
- **Phone support.** Call the hotline for technical assistance.
- **Remote screen sharing.** Operate software collaboratively with a consultant at a distance.
- **Online help.** Help yourself to the library of tutorials and quickstart guides on our website. Link to tutorials or print them out.
- **In-class workshops.** Schedule a time for us to come to your class.
- **Small-group workshops.** Register for a pre-scheduled workshop.

Contact Us

Hotline (University Park): 814-874-9721

Hotline (Toll-Free): 866-266-7496

Email: digitalcommons@psu.edu

Online Resources

Homepage: <http://digitalcommons.psu.edu>

Campus-Specific Pages: <http://digitalcommons.psu.edu/locate>

Workshops: <http://digitalcommons.psu.edu/workshops>