Lights, Camera, Social Action: Using Video to Engage Youth and Stakeholders

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Implementing Effective Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Programs
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Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Identify video projects’ benefits, strengths and opportunities;

2. Consider different ways to engage youth in video-making; and

3. Explore options and consider community partners for implementing a video project.
Why Video?

Benefits: General

- 65% of population are visual learners (Visual Teaching Alliance, 2004)
- Images are powerful and stay with an audience
- People associate images with information and emotions

Mary Vecchio cries over the body of one of the Kent State University students who had just been shot by Ohio National Guard soldiers on May 4, 1970. Photograph by John Filo
Why Video?

Benefits: Youth

**Positive youth development:**
Helping youth reach their full potential is the best way to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors.

Youth-produced video provides youth with a variety of skill-building opportunities, including:

- Writing
- Editing
- Set design
- Costume design
- Acting
- Interviewing
- Camera skills
- Visual thinking
- Ascetic appreciation
- Critical thinking
- Leadership
- Storytelling
- Teaching
- Long-term planning

Importantly, youth have the chance to take control and express their reality in their own, authentic way.
Youth-produced video has many benefits for spreading the word about your good work to your community, potential program participants, stakeholders and funders, including:

- Puts a youth face on the issues
- Tangible product that can be shared
- Can showcase your space, programs and staff
- Easy to share and distribute (your website, YouTube, burning DVDs)
- Compliments more formal and traditional proposals/information
- Can be very inexpensive and reach a wide audience
Before you commit to a self-produced, youth-driven video project, you should carefully consider the desired outcome of the project.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the purpose/goal of making this?
- Is it more important for the youth to have a positive experience, or for the product to be polished?
- Who is the audience? How are you planning on distributing this? Are there unintended audiences to consider?
- How professional does the video need to look?
What is a digital story?

- Combination of audio, moving and still images and narration
- Short, personal stories

Examples:

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvCRHTQwXAk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvCRHTQwXAk)
- [http://www.creativenarrations.net/node/16](http://www.creativenarrations.net/node/16)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke5Mbc8v9m0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke5Mbc8v9m0)

Resources:

- [http://www.digitalstoryteller.org](http://www.digitalstoryteller.org)
- [www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)
What is a public service announcement (PSA)?

- Short, 30-90 second advocacy piece
- Intended to raise awareness, make an argument or suggest an action
- Can be documentary, narrative or a combination

Examples:
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1TTGDTclH8&NR=1&feature=endscreen
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vluLdg6wfbw
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-ElMvLBqV0&feature=related
Project Options

News Story/Interview

What is a news story/interview?

- Mini-documentary following a traditional news format
- Can be one interview, short expose piece
- Can range from 1-3 minutes
- Focused on one issue, person or event from a youth perspective

Examples:
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5q_zSnxnxA Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5q_zSnxnxA Q)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1nJe9U63ZA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1nJe9U63ZA)
What is a documentary?

- Non-narrative story on a particular issue
- Highlights an event, issue, person
- Can range from 2 minutes to full length
- Combine interviews, news coverage and narrative elements
Case Study: Young Women’s Project PSAs

Choosing the Project

- Small, D.C. area non-profit with summer youth staff of about 15
- Ages 14-21
- Organization focused on empowering foster teens and peer allies to advocates for foster care reform in D.C.
- Equipment limited to one camera, one tripod (no audio equipment) and Premier
- Short time window to complete video project (3 weeks or less)
- Intended to be screened at foster youth presentation to caregivers, parents, social workers and D.C. Child Family Service staff
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Pre-Production Steps

- Learn film basics
- Choose objectives and audience
- Brainstorm
- Outline
- Write Script
- Storyboard
- Shot list
- Production Plan
## Case Study: Young Women’s Project PSAs

### Session 1: Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learn film basics</th>
<th>o Discussion of favorite films</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose objectives and audience</td>
<td>o Discussion/definition of visual storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorm</td>
<td>o Identify elements of film (characters, setting, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>o Go over shots and angles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Script</td>
<td>o Show examples of film (specifically related to the project type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Plan</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Shot Worksheet**

**Hit Me With Your Best Shot**

Look at the pictures of shots here and take your own using a digital still camera. Remember to use the rule of thirds for all of your shots.

- **Close Up**
- **Long Shot/Full Body Shot**
- **High Angle Shot**
- **Low Angle Shot**
- **Over the Shoulder Shot**
- **Close Up**
- **Point of View Shot**
- **Medium Shot**
- **Extreme Long Shot/Establishing Shot**
- **Close Up**
- **Two Shot**
- **Medium Shot**
- **Close Up**

**Macro**

**Medium Shot**

**Over the Shoulder Shot**
**Three Act Story Structure**

**Inciting Incident**

Set Up
(characters, setting, guides us into the conflict)

Build Up
(explore conflict, expand characters and their relationships)

Climax

Resolution
(things wind down and wrap up)

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**Cinderella Example**

- **Invited to the ball**
- Conflict: Cinderella wants to go the ball
- Cinderella is sad about not being able to go
- Cinderella finds Fairy Godmother
- Cinderella goes to the ball (with some stipulations)
- Cinderella and prince fall in love

Clock strikes midnight, shoe is left

- Prince finds Cinderella
- Prince and Cinderella get married

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- Characters: Cinderella (poor, pretty, dead father, has to clean a lot, lonely)
  - Evil Step Mother and evil sisters (rich, evil, mean)
  - Townspeople (the normal people), Prince (lonely, young, attractive, needs queen)
- Setting: town, some sort of medieval time
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Session 2: Brainstorm to Outline

Learn film basics
Choose objectives and audience
Brainstorm
Outline
Write Script
Storyboard
Shot list
Production Plan

- Review of previous lesson
- Break project into options (story, information overload, many voices)
- In production groups, complete critical questions worksheet
- In production groups, complete an outline
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Worksheet Example

PSA Critical Questions Worksheet

Discuss these questions as a group and come to a decision:

• Who is the audience for your PSA? (foster youth, all youth, social workers, someone who knows nothing about foster care, etc)

• What is the main point?

• What is your goal/are your goals? (i.e., to inform, to inspire, to outrage, etc.)

• What do you want people to do after watching it? (what effect should it have on them?)

• How could each of the three types of PSAs help you prove your point?
  “Many Voices” Model
  “Story” Model
  “Information Overload” Model

• Which type will be the best for your message? Why? Can you combine elements from different models?

• Discuss how you can show your point with images, text and voices. How does it start? How does it end?
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Session 3: Storyboarding and Scriptwriting

- Review of previous lessons
- Provide feedback on outlines
- In production groups, complete script and storyboard

Learn film basics
Choose objectives and audience
Brainstorm
Outline
Write Script
Storyboard
Shot list
Production Plan
1-1
ELS - Facility establishing - Night Ext.

1-2
LS - Laboratory Hallway - Night Ext.

1-3
POV - Lab Techs Hover over Patient - Night Int.

2-1
ELS - Cabin window is lit through dense trees - Night Ext.

2-2
MLS - Man sits in Cabin Speaking into tape recorder - Night Ext.

2-3
ECU - Man speaks into tape recorder - Night Int.

2-4
CU - moth flutters around lantern - Night Int.

2-5
MLS - Profile - man speaks into recorder - Night Int.
Your Turn: Challenge

With a partner, complete a storyboard for one step of the following sequence (use at least 3 shots in your step):

1) Teen girl walks into crowded cafeteria. All the tables look full.
2) She tries to sit at two different tables and gets dirty looks.
3) A girl at a third table says “Hey! I can scoot over”
4) Teen girl smiles and sits. Text appears that says “Be kind to others.”
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Session 4: Production Planning

- Learn film basics
- Choose objectives and audience
- Brainstorm
- Outline
- Write Script
- Storyboard
- Shot list
- Production Plan

- Review previous lessons
- Provide feedback on scripts and storyboards
- In production groups, complete production planning discussion/worksheet
- Determine Roles
- Create shot list
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shot #</th>
<th>Type of Shot</th>
<th>Location and Action in the Shot</th>
<th>Complete? (check)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Long/Establishing</td>
<td>Outside building: Slow tilt from bottom to top of tall building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Close Up</td>
<td>Outside building: building door, hand pushes door open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Close up</td>
<td>Outside building: door, person leaves, door slams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wide shot</td>
<td>Inside building: Man walks down hallway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Worksheet Example

Production Plan

There are many considerations to have a smooth, successful production. This is a list of questions that you need to discuss, answer and take action on prior to your production day. This list is not complete — think about everything you need and ask your own questions! Make sure to determine who is responsible for what.

- Does your shot list cover all of the shots on your storyboard?
- Which locations are you going to? At what times? In what order? Do you know the location will be available?
- How are your locations going to be set up? What scenery is necessary?
- What props do you need? Do people need to bring things in? Do you need to make something new?
- What should people wear? Are there colors you want to bring out? Do people need to borrow clothes from each other or make something new? Do people need to wear different things in different scenes/shots?
- How many actors do you need?
- Who will play which part/say which lines? Do the actors know what they’re doing and when you need them? Do they know what to wear and/or bring?
- If you have exterior (outside) shots planned, what’s your plan if it rains?
- What effects are you counting on in post-production? Are you sure they’re all available?
- What audio (sound) do you want in your video? Which sounds do you have to film? Which ones can be added later? Did you include voiceover in your shot list? What kind of music do you want, if any?
- If the shoot takes longer than anticipated, are you willing to shoot into lunch?
- What other considerations are there? How are they being taken care of?
Recommendations

Lessons Learned

• Pitch the idea and have youth decide if they want to do the project
• Be realistic with youth about the level of pre-production work
• Only show high-level examples, not amateur ones
• Remind youth of the overall process so they see how all the pieces connect
• If possible, have youth do practice projects and reflect on the experience
• Keep production teams small (4-5 youth) and, if possible, have staff guide discussions
• Make sure you have parent/guardian permission to film youth
**Challenges**

- Your staff does not have a background in video production
- You are not confident in teaching video or storytelling
- You don’t know how to use editing software

**Solutions**

- See if there are youth media groups in your area that may be of assistance
- Partner with an academic institution/seek a volunteer or intern in a film program who can lend expertise
- Acquire resources; see the Educational Video Center (http://www.evc.org/), which includes some free curricula as well as training. Their book, *Teaching Youth Media: a Critical Guide to Literacy, Video Production & Social Change* could be helpful as well
- Recognize the skills you have that are transferrable to filmmaking and create a plan
- Look online for free or cheap editing training
## Challenges

- You need the following items on a budget:
  - Video camera
  - Microphone
  - Tripod
  - Editing software

## Solutions

- Local academic institutions or non-profits may have these to share
- Partner with an academic institution/seek a volunteer or intern in a film program who can borrow the equipment for you and lend expertise
- Windows Movie Maker is very basic, but free to download. iMovie is under $50. Premier (for PC) and Final Cut Pro (for Macs) are the best software and discounts are available.
- Adapt your project to minimal equipment (i.e., no synchronized sound if you can’t access a microphone)
- Search websites for inexpensive cameras and tripods – buy used.
**Challenges**

- Many flip cams and inexpensive camcorders do NOT have a microphone jack (i.e., you cannot use a microphone with them)
- In-camera mic is very weak and picks up nearby sounds
- Poor audio will ruin a movie

**Solutions**

- Buy or borrow a camera and microphone from a local college or university
- Make videos without synchronized sound; use voice-over and music instead
- Test the audio in different locations before your shoot; aim for small, quiet and indoor spaces
Educational Video Center
http://www.evc.org/

List of youth media organizations
http://www.freechild.org/YouthMediaOrgs.htm

Youth media resources and guidance
http://www.freechild.org/YouthMediaResources.htm#Video

Research on youth media
http://www.issuelab.org/closeup/Mar_2008

Listen Up: America’s Youth Speak Out (resources, funding opportunities)
http://listenup.org/community/whatitmeans.php

http://www.issuelab.org/research/youth_media_i_exist_i_am_visible_i_matter