Mini-documentaries

Project Overview

Documentaries attempt to represent reality rather than tell a fictional story. Documentaries are essentially nonfiction film. In this project, students work in teams to create a mini-documentary: identifying the theme, audience, and goals for a particular topic. Within each team, students manage tasks from a particular filmmaking role perspective. In the process of making a mini-documentary, students learn to create advanced motion and color effects, use audio-editing techniques, and compose a musical score. Finally, each team will present their film in a student film festival.

Student product: Mini-documentary

Note: Portions of this project align to the Adobe Certified Associate objectives. Within the instruction steps and technical guides, the specific learning objectives for the exam(s) are referenced with the following format: [1.1]

Project Objectives

The objectives for this project are met by using all of the associated activities along with the specific project guidelines.

Project management skills

• Creating a project plan, milestones, and roles
• Managing tasks related to roles
• Planning and managing concurrent editing by multiple editors
• Planning for contingencies

Design skills

• Identifying documentary theme, audience, and goals
• Understanding image file types and resolutions for video

• Using color effects in documentaries
• Using motion effects in documentaries
• Directing shots
• Understanding impacts of visual compositions that include picture-in-picture
• Using action videography

Research and communication skills

• Conducting research
• Understanding copyright issues
• Writing scripts
• Conducting peer reviews
• Presenting films

Technical Skills

Adobe Premiere Pro

- Creating transitions, borders, sepia tones, and soft-focus effects
- Using keyframes for motion effects
- Using picture-in-picture
- Using a nested sequences editing technique
- Creating titles and rolling credits

Audition

- Editing audio
- Applying effects to audio clips
- Using loops, music beds, and sound effects

Encore

- Creating a DVD

Project Activities

- *Activity:* Introduction to compositing and chroma keying
- *Activity:* Applying video effects
- *Activity:* Design project review and redesign
- *Activity:* Creating soundtracks and adding sound effects
- *Activity:* How to create supers, titles and credits
- *Activity:* Exporting video
- *Activity:* Creating DVDs with Encore

Background preparation resources

Technical and content information

Keywords

ISTE NETS*S Standards for Students

Adobe Certified Associate objectives

Project Steps

1. Introduce students to the goals of the project.
   - Work in teams to create a short documentary.
   - Identify the documentary theme, audience, and goals.
   - Work with still images and apply special transitions and effects.
   - Learn editing, audio-effect, and scoring techniques in Audition.
   - Create a DVD and export a web-ready format for the documentary.

2. Share examples of short documentaries and discuss theme, audience, and goals.[1.2] Discuss the elements that make a film a documentary. Finally, as students watch the documentaries, discuss the following:
   - How color, motion, and audio effects are used to affect tone and mood.[2.3]
   - How music is used throughout the documentary and its effect on the tone and purpose.[2.4]
   - How still images are used within a film and how effects and transitions affect their impact.[2.5]
   - Importance of credits.

   Note: You might gather a variety of examples of documentaries prior to this activity.

3. Introduce the project by explaining the guidelines for the mini-documentaries. Guidelines might include:
   - Length should be 5–10 minutes.
   - Can use footage from previous projects.
   - Include still images that incorporate transitions and effects.
   - Include at least one color, one picture-in-picture, one motion effect, and one audio effect.
   - Include a musical score they create in Audition.
   - Include a full menu of credits.
   - Apply copyright citation and fair use guidelines where applicable.
   - Follow the journalistic code of ethics.

4. Form student teams of two or three people. Where possible, mix members with different strengths, such as visual design or technical skill. Discuss the concept of working as a team and roles in filmmaking.[1.4]

   Note: If necessary, review the *Introduction to project planning, project management, and teamwork* activity.

5. Allow teams time to assign roles and brainstorm the theme, audience, and goals for their mini-documentary.[1.1] Additionally, using what they learned in previous projects, each team should brainstorm if and how they will use lighting, shot selection, b-roll footage, interviews, voiceover narration, compositing shots, and visual effects to impact the mood and intention of their documentaries.[2.2, 2.3]

   Note: If resources are available, have teams conduct a multi-camera shoot and demonstrate how to edit footage in Adobe Premiere Pro by using the multi-camera feature.

6. Allow students time to research their mini-documentary topic. Explain that if necessary they should contact (via e-mail, phone, web conferencing, and so on) any individuals or organizations that will help them gather information.

   Note: If necessary, review the *Research and screenwriting* activity, reminding students to assess the appropriateness of the information they gather and collect.

7. Allow each group time to write a treatment for their documentary and submit it for instructor approval.

   Note: You may want to review script-writing techniques and discuss how a documentary script might be different from other scripts students have written.[2.1]

8. While they are awaiting approval, have each team identify assets (such as audio, images, interviews, and narration) needed for their documentary.[1.2]

   Note: If necessary, review the *Editing images and graphics* and *Understanding digital photography and digital images* activities.

9. Remind students about the use of still images in the examples of documentaries and discuss the basics of shooting pictures and the importance of image resolution so they can take and prepare their own images for use in the documentary. Review the appropriate image formats for video.[2.4]

   Note: Ask students to properly apply copyright citation and fair use guidelines to any visual or audio assets they use. If necessary, review the *Copyright and fair use* activity.

10. Once they receive their approved treatment, allow each team time to create the following that will also handed in for instructor approval:
    - Shot list (if necessary, review the *Video pre-production planning* activity)
    - Script (if necessary, review the *Research and screenwriting* activity)
    - Project proposal, with talent (actors) identified, if applicable

11. Each team should also identify any needed participants to interview. Once they receive their approved treatment, allow each team time to create a draft of interview questions for participants' for instructor approval.

    Note: If teams are working with actors, you might want to discuss the importance of directing. You may also need to create a schedule for students to have access to blue/green screens for shooting composite shots.

12. Pair two groups so they can conduct a peer review with each other's scripts and then finalize the scripts based on recommended changes.

    Note: If necessary, review the guidelines from the *Peer review* activity.[2.6]

13. Allow each team time to shoot the necessary footage and interviews from their shot list, using the equipment and locations identified in their project proposal.

14. Allow each time to select clips, shots, and assets they will use in their documentary. After selecting clips, shots, and assets, ask teams to go back to their approved draft scripts and interview questions and make any necessary revisions based on their selected assets. Some groups may also need to revise and submit their scripts again for approval. Remind students that any changes that require more footage will impact their schedules.

15. Allow each team time to record any necessary voiceover narration.

    Note: If necessary, review the *Editing audio with Adobe Audition* activity.

16. *Activity:* Introduction to compositing and chroma key   ACA Exam Objectives: 1.4, 2.2, 2.3, 4.2, 4.6
    (Suggested time: 100-150 minutes)

Follow these steps to utilize this activity for this project:

a. This activity introduces chroma keying and compositing to help students create video projects without needing to be on location.

b. Encourage teams to use separate nested sequences, breaking projects into segments they can edit concurrently to create challenging effects. Explain that this is especially helpful in large projects with multiple editors.

17. *Activity:* Applying video effects   ACA Exam Objectives: 2.3, 2.5, 4.1, 4.5, 4.6
    (Suggested time: 100-150 minutes)

Follow these steps to utilize this activity for this project.

a. Use this activity to introduce your students to effects, including how to apply text effects, motion effects, and image effects.

b. Ask students to use picture-in-picture, beveled edges and shadows, and other special effects to create compelling still images for use in their mini-documentaries.

c. Encourage students to use 3D effects in their mini-documentaries.

d. If necessary, demonstrate keyframe manipulation to create motion effects.

18. *Activity:* Design project review and redesign   ACA Exam Objectives: 1.1, 2.6, 1.1, 1.4, 1.1, 2.6,
    (Suggested time: 50 minutes)   1.1, 1.6, 1.1, 1.4, 1.1, 1.4

Follow these steps to utilize this activity for this project:

a. Use this activity to teach your students how to engage in a formal review and redesign process to help them improve and expand their video production skills.

b. Instruct students to use their footage and assets to create a rough cut of the documentary.

Note: Remind students about the ethical responsibility of editors as they prepare their mini-documentary.

c. Have teams pair up and conduct a review and redesign process.

d. Ask students to check in with their project proposals as they engage in the review and redesign process to be sure they can still make all deadlines. Re-address deadlines if they will not be able to meet them.

19. *Activity:* Creating soundtracks and adding sound effects
    (Suggested time: 50 - 100 minutes)

Follow these steps to utilize this activity for this project:

a. This activity introduces your students to the impact and process of creating audio effects and soundtracks for video projects.
b. Ask teams to apply audio effects to the audio from their footage.
c. Ask students to use the available loops, music beds, and sound effects in Adobe Audition to create a soundtrack for their mini-documentaries.

20. *Activity:* How to create supers, titles, and credits   ACA Exam Objectives: 3.2, 4.5
    (Suggested time: 50 - 100 minutes)

Follow these steps to utilize this activity for this project:

a. This activity introduces how and when to use text in a video project and how to create supers, titles, and credits.
b. Allow each team time to create rolling credits and any other supers and titles for their documentary films.

21. Allow each team time to create the final cut of their mini-documentary.

22. *Activity:* Exporting video   ACA Exam Objectives: 5.1, 5.2
    Activity: Creating DVDs with Encore   ACA Exam Objectives: 5.1
    (Suggested time: 50 - 100 minutes)

Follow these steps to utilize these activities for this project:

a. Use these two activities to introduce options for exporting video to different mediums and formats, file types, and the need for the various formats and how to author a DVD.
b. Instruct students to export their videos to DVD format and create a single-menu DVD by using Encore.
c. Instruct students to export their videos in a web-ready format.

23. *Activity:* Presenting design projects　　　　　　　ACA Exam Objectives: 2.6, 1.4, 2.6, 1.6, 1.4, 1.4
　　　(Suggested time: 50-100 minutes)

Follow these steps to utilize this activity for this project:

a. Explain that the class will conduct a film festival. As a class, define the awards categories and create an awards list with criteria for each category. Some things to include might be:

　• Writing

　• Film editing

　• Sound editing

　• Visual effects

　• Musical direction

　• Direction

　• Cinematography

b. Have each team screen their documentary for the class. At the conclusion of the film, have each student complete an award sheet for that documentary. Collect the award sheets and hold a class ceremony honoring each of the films.

Note: It is recommended to try to have each team win at least one award.

Extension Activities

You can extend the project in the following ways:

• *Ancillary materials*: After students have completed their mini-documentaries, have them design and create other materials they might need to promote the films, such as a short movie trailer.

• *Cross-curricular extension*: Work with a content area teacher (for instance, science, English, or social studies) and support the teacher and students as they create a documentary film as a class project in that subject.

Assessment

This is a high level view of what student should create during this project. Refer to the assessment rubrics in each activity for more detailed/specific assessment rubrics for each part of the project.

	0 – Does not meet expectations	3 – Meets expectations	5 – Exceeds expectations
Mini-documentary – content	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Documentary is 5–10 minutes in length and includes still images. The documentary story uses research and interviews to support the content and engages multiple audiences.	Documentary is 5–10 minutes in length and clearly and effectively tells the "real" story on a topic that engages multiple audiences. The documentary topic is clearly and fully researched, tells multiple sides of the story, and the interviews support the content. The documentary is engaging and uses still images.
Mini-documentary – technical	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	The documentary uses at least one each of a motion, color, and picture-in-picture effect. Documentary has an original musical soundtrack and a full menu of credits. Documentary is in DVD format.	The documentary includes one or more each of a motion, color, and picture-in-picture effect and each has a clear impact on the mood of the film. The documentary includes an original musical soundtrack and a full menu of credits. It is in DVD format with a template menu.

Team work	Absent or incomplete.	Student teams collaborate and interact with peers, experts, or others to create rough cut and final mini-documentary. Teams plan and manage a project proposal with a schedule of deliverables. Teams assess deliverable schedule and re-address deadlines where applicable. Student fulfills assigned team roles and contributes equally to project work. Student sometimes consults with other team members on major project decisions but makes minimal effort to help others build skills.	Student teams expressly collaborate and interact with peers, experts, or others to create assembly cut, rough cut, and final commercial. Teams expertly and efficiently plan and manage a project proposal with a schedule of deliverables. Teams assess deliverable schedule and re-address deadlines where applicable. Student fulfills assigned team roles and contributes equally to project work. Student consults with other team members on major project decisions and voluntarily helps others build skills to complete the project.
Time management		Student allots time for each phase of the design and development process. Completes most phases on schedule.	Student thoughtfully and effectively allots time for each phase of the design and development process. Completes all phases on schedule.

Background preparation resources

- To view video tutorials aligned with the skills required to complete this project, visit Adobe TV: http://tv.adobe.com.

- For more teaching and learning resources on the topics in this project, search for resources from the community on the Adobe Education Exchange: http://edex.adobe.com/

- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of *Adobe Premiere Pro,* see *Premiere Pro* Help.

- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of *Adobe Audition,* see *Audition* Help.

- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of *Adobe After Effects,* see *After Effects* Help.

Documentaries

- Documentary Film 101:
  http://documentaries.about.com/od/introtodocumentaries/Documentary_Film_101.htm
- Advice on directing and fundraising for a documentary film:
  www.creativehat.com/Filmmaking/a020501a.htm
- Shooting tips for making a documentary:
  www.dvworkshops.com/newsletters/shootingdynamicdoc.html#article2
- Free access to documentaries: www.snagfilms.com/

Keywords

- credits
- keyframe interpolation
- loop
- music bed

- nested sequences
- picture-in-picture
- sound effect

ISTE NETS*S Standards for Students

This project is aligned to the ISTE NETS*S Technology Standards. Depending on the subject and content area the student selects you may research your own state content standards to see how this project aligns to your state requirements.

ISTE NETS*S: Curriculum and Content Area Standards – NETS for Students

1. Creativity and Innovation

   Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

   a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.

   b. create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

   d. identify trends and forecast possibilities.

2. Communication and Collaboration

   Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:

   b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats

3. Research and Information Retrieval

   Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students:

   a. plan strategies to guide inquiry.

   b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.

   c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks

4. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

   Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students:

   a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.

   b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.

   d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

5. Digital Citizenship

   Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:

   a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.

   b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.

   c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

   Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. Students:

   a. understand and use technology systems.

   b. select and use applications effectively and productively.

   d. transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies.

Adobe Certified Associate Exam Objectives

Adobe Certified Associate, Web Authoring objectives

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for a website.

2.6 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design and content plans.

Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for preparing image(s).

1.4 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design plans.

Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication objectives

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for preparing video.

1.2 Identify the video content that is relevant to the project purpose and appropriate for the target audience.

1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of the production planning and management process.

2.1 Demonstrate knowledge of how to organize and plan a video sequence.

2.2 Identify general principles for video shooting.

2.3 Demonstrate knowledge of visual techniques for enhancing video content.

2.4 Demonstrate knowledge of using audio to enhance video content.

2.5 Demonstrate knowledge of using still images to enhance video content.

2.6 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design and content plans.

3.2 Identify the functions of Adobe Premiere Pro interface elements.

4.1 Import media assets (video, images, and audio files).

4.2 Organize and manage video clips in a sequence.

4.5 Manage superimposed text and shapes in a video sequence.

4.6 Add and manage effects and transitions in a video sequence.

5.1 Demonstrate knowledge of export options for video.

5.2 Demonstrate knowledge of how to export video from Adobe Premiere Pro.

Adobe Certified Associate, Interactive Media Communication objectives

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for interactive media content.

1.6 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design and content plans.

Adobe Certified Associate, Graphic Design & Illustration objectives

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for preparing graphics.

1.4 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design plans.

Adobe Certified Associate, Print & Digital Media Publication objectives

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for preparing page layouts.

1.4 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design plans.

For more information

Find more teaching materials for using Adobe software in your classroom on the Adobe Education Exchange: http://edex.adobe.com/.