

FMTV 120

Updated: 6/2/2025
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Program

Teaching Innovations Program (TIP): a year-long program that supports faculty teams in developing or redesigning a course or academic program

Intervention

Reorganization of coursework and schedule to best introduce core skills to freshman students with a wide range of interests and experience levels. This gives them the opportunity to decide what aspects of their Film and Television coursework they would like to explore more deeply or reinforce as well as focus on Peer-to-Peer interactions.

We also created a uniform midterm, as well as chapter quizzes (these were omitted in SP25 and used to structure in-class assignments that were assessed), and an asynchronous editing module to ensure a baseline understanding of the editing process and program the University can support.

Participating faculty

TIP Participants

Prof. Anthony Pemberton

Prof. Alan Blanco (Course Coordinator)

Prof. Chloe Sarbib

Piloters (FA24)

Adjunct Prof. Brittany Zwier

Adjunct Prof. Dalton Snider-Smith

Implementation

The new sequence and timing of course material seemed to be a big success and was continued in SP25. Students with either previous experience or higher aptitude for the material were grouped with other students who needed more support by the professor in subsequent in class group work.

The editing module has been implemented. SP25 students had more preexisting knowledge of alternate platforms, though we had success in async utilization of the modules by two students

with no editorial experience. The quizzes were made, but later dropped and turned into group exercises that were assessed for points.

We are still planning to implement a course sequence change with a more streamlined technical class to precede Filmmaking 1. This will allow groups to be based on concept interest, in essence forming crews that will focus their learning opportunities.

The coordination with the logistical needs of other sections will be greater this coming academic year. Now that we are a full Department in a College and no longer an Area, we are electing various course coordinators and other positions with the possibility of course releases. One of us will most likely take that position to ensure uniformity moving forward with our growing needs. To do so, by August, we'll be surveying other teachers and new adjuncts in subsequent classes about how their students take to the material with our ground work. We'll also develop questions for those hiring new adjuncts to better assess their skills/knowledge to better tailor the Course Guide.

Time management - We'd also like to further integrate with other resources at the university to foster/address work outside of class for students who want or need more time to practice. Whether it is SI help or utilization of CAST, early next semester, we can spend more time highlighting these resources (and perhaps having a CAST tutor visit class).

Course Redesign Goals and Analysis

Summary

Goal 1: Redesign course to emphasize teams and collaboration

Status: **Met**/Implemented in SP25

Discussion: Moving graded quiz work to graded in-class group work was effective. Each student was able to take on a concept from the reading hands on with other students there to help with recall and application.

For many students, we would surmise that teaching other students the technical processes reinforced their own learning at a higher Bloom's level. At the same time, their group mates were also more likely to actively listen and engage with the topic than when asked to read or review material asynchronously.

This collaborative focus culminated in a group Final Films. Students needed to crew on at least two films with overall extra credit with additional sets worked. Personally

speaking (this is Alan) the films' overall quality was much higher than before. Each film was crewed by at least 5 to 6 classmates whereas previously student filmmakers might have only completed their films by recruiting 2 or 3 crew members, often friends and family. Because of the increased crew size, each concept like lighting, acting, directing, all excelled.

Goal 2: Redesign course content and sequence to improve consistency in student learning outcomes

Status: met

Discussion: The async module raised the students' baseline understanding of editing concepts. The course sequence change and accelerated coursework improved consistency in outcomes simply because students who knew more were encouraged to bolster their classmates' learning. There were fewer students on an island or without help or additional support so their learning tended to rise as well.

Goal 3: Align course better with subsequent courses

Status: on hold

Discussion: Our department has bought in on the new course sequence. We are currently redesigning the course Intro to Production (FMTV222) to work as an elementary class in camera operation, location sound recording, and editorial. This will inform future revisions to FMTV120.

Goal 4: Redesign to better serve non-director populations who take this course

Status: met

Discussion: Group projects were the best way to guide them to the subsequent courses based on their core concept interest (e.g. cinematography, producing, sound)

Student Perspectives

Overall student perspectives were very high with Group work and Group Final implementation.

Here are some excerpts regarding the course (8 out of 17 respondents)

- Course as a Whole - 7 Excellent, 1 Very Good

- Course Content - 6 Excellent, 2 Very Good
- Course Organization - 6 Excellent, 2 Very Good
- Assignment and Concepts - 8 Excellent
- Quality of Problems - 5 Excellent, 3 Very Good
- Class Time Usage - 6 Excellent, 2 Very Good

Here is one student success story: One student directed and produced their first film which was very good. Their reflection on its process, however, was very negative. This student learned how hard it is to make a movie and at that point knew they did not want to direct again and wanted to focus on writing.

This student then worked with an exceptional director in class on the final project, writing the script for their story. During production they had a setback. Namely they missed a train for a specific shot they had come up with. This student was adamant in waiting and getting the shot because of how much they wanted the project to be the best it could be. All the other students agreed and they waited an hour beyond what was planned to get the shot (which was beautiful).

The student related this story stating (paraphrased) “I thought I never wanted to do this again but being there with the other students I knew we needed to get the shot and we all had so much fun. It made me want to direct again. Maybe...”

Witnessing and being a part of other students' hard work gave that student more interest in pursuing their own (provided that they have a good crew and support to do so).

Grade Data Highlights

Overall student performance improved, as the quality of the final films greatly improved with more mandated support. Put frankly, students with less technical aptitude could be part of a crew that produced a higher quality film than had they been mandated to do one on their own.

One thing that should be mentioned: students demonstrated greater persistence during the pilot. Anecdotally, students who were not performing well in previous semesters often felt discouraged by their standing in class and by their calculation of what was necessary to pass, sometimes just not handing in anything. With group emphasis it was much easier to perform and not give up because that would affect other students. It made it easier to keep going. Moving forward, there should be more precise assessment tools to parse out the individual effort.

Notably, the standard deviation among sections decreased significantly from Fall24 (14.1%) to Spring25 (2.6%).

Next Steps

The main steps now are hybridizing the async reading with the in-class work. We need both. We'll also be exploring more ways to assess and scaffold the Group Work. Ideally, there can be multiple pathways introduced in Canvas with additional async materials.

Also, we'll be exploring more async editing modules with alternative platforms, namely Davinci Resolve since that is the most ubiquitous free platform available.

Other next steps include:

- Making a consistent user profile for the Sony ZV-E10 cameras *per class*.
- Developing a practical aspect to the Midterm
- Broadening film examples and materials to better support outside perspectives and techniques
- Developing more precise group assessments
- Developing a recitation-style workshop during the week to be run by TAs and coordinated with course sequence