

## BBA TU110 2011-1 Group Project Reviews

Before you begin working on your own group projects, you should review the projects from previous classes and learn from their mistakes.

These are some of the main elements that **better projects** seem to have in common:

1. Research and Planning – It is impossible to make a good movie just by making things up as you go. You have to research the topic and have good ideas before you start writing the screenplay. You have to have a very good idea what you want the finished movie to look like *before* you start filming.
2. Good video equipment (HD) – Groups that make the better projects go to the extra effort to get HD video cameras. Movies are a visual experience and high quality visuals make a significant difference.
3. Good sound - The major improvement this semester over previous semesters was the high quality of the audio tracks. Most likely this was due to groups using separate audio recorders (iPhones). Still, you will notice that some audio tracks are better than others. You need to practice with the equipment before making your movie.

These are some areas where past projects have the most **room for improvement**:

1. Research and Planning – Too often, groups just hand over writing responsibilities to a couple group members and leave it to them to do all of the research and writing. That is almost always a very bad idea. All members of the group should do initial research so that they can help the group find its theme for the movie and to help brainstorm creative ways for the group to convey its most important ideas.
2. Pretending – Do not pretend to be anyone that you are not. Do not pretend to be making a show that you are not. You are students making a documentary and that is OK. Students often say that documentaries are boring, but this is not true of all documentaries. It is only true of documentaries whose filmmakers did not put in the necessary effort to figure out a way to make the documentary interesting.
3. Using too many still images with narration – Sometimes there is no substitute for a still image, like when you need to show a historical photograph, but using still images when video could do the same job better is lazy filmmaking. Narrating over still images should be kept to a minimum.

The individual group project reviews follow. Clicking on the project title will take you to the documentary on YouTube.

## Bangkok Art and Culture Centre

This project did a good job presenting the basic information about its subject, the technical aspects of filmmaking were fine, and the transcript was well written, but this was a project that needed more research and planning, and more editing (especially of the interview) to remove the less interesting parts.

Although this movie had a short “history of” section at the beginning, the overall impression was that the group went down to the BACC and made a movie of what they found there. This was demonstrated by the fact that the group did not have good questions planned for their interview with the director of the BACC (“What do the BACC do when it is closed?”), and also by the minimum research demonstrated in the transcript footnotes. A number of interesting issues were touched on in the documentary (such as the role of art in society), but the main theme seemed to be walking from floor to floor and seeing what was there.

## Lumpini Park

- Although this was very watchable documentary, the project had significant room for improvement.
- With more brainstorming and planning, this group could have found many more compelling ways to present basic information about Lumpini Park.
- The transcript only had three footnotes and failed to provide a cover page as requested.
- This movie is a good example of overreliance on still images when video could do the job better.

## Chinatown

This project did a good job presenting the diversity of things for which Bangkok’s Chinatown is famous and came close to tying the project around a theme of coexistence between Thai and Chinese cultures. The transcript was complete and reflected a variety of research, but failed to cite sources properly.

Two areas with room for improvement were the introduction and knowing the audience. There was no real introduction to the movie, historical information was suddenly presented to the viewer without any context. In another example of lack of empathy for the viewer, many references were made which would only make sense to somebody that is already familiar with Bangkok and Thai culture. For example, the audience has no idea what Yaowarat Road is prior to the movie mentioning it. Also, non-Thais do not know that Thailand celebrates Chinese festivals such as the annual vegetarian festival. That sort of information needs a proper introduction.

## Erawan Shrine

- The movie had some very good filmmaking, including examples of good sound quality from a very noisy environment, and interesting shot planning and choreography.
- This project did a very good job of finding an interesting theme to explore the topic of the Erawan Shrine, but it did not provide cited research to support its many claims.
- Non-Thais watching this movie would be completely lost, much more background and contextual information needed to be provided.
- This movie had too much bias for a documentary. The conclusion of the movie was basically an editorial for Thai citizens. Know your audience.

## Hua Lamphong

This was an very well done project. The video and audio were excellent. The graphics and editing were smooth and unobtrusive. The transcript was complete (with a couple of mistakes that should have been caught) and also reflected a good effort, although not a surplus of sources.

Unfortunately, because the group failed to find an interesting theme, this documentary was often boring. Any time you find yourself listing a bunch of numbers, like the length of various tracks, you need to stop and think about what you are doing. Although this presented a lot of good information, somebody in the group should have spoken up when they found themselves saying things like, “there are snack shops inside.”

This project was screaming for a uniting theme which never materialized. Two ideas for a theme were touched on, but never developed. First, using the station to explore the transformation of Thailand into a modern country. Second, the romance of train travel.

## Neilson Hays Library

- This was a very well made documentary, especially with regard to cinematography, which presented a comprehensive look at its subject.
- The criticism could be made that “style” was overemphasized compared to “content”, especially with regard to the “music video” portions of the film.
- An easy way to have given this documentary more substance would have been to do interviews with the library’s patrons.

## Wat Pho

- This was a very well-researched project that appeared to reflect a good deal of planning, but could have used better cinematography.
- The opening shots were great, but would have been better if a tripod had been used.
- This is another project that suffered from an overreliance on still images.
- The sound quality of some scenes could have been better.
- While a lot of interesting information was presented, a good theme could have helped the group decide which information was most important to try to communicate to the audience.
- There was something of a missed opportunity in this project, as little attention was paid to what Wat Pho is arguably most famous for.

## **In Their Own Words**

Here is the advice that the students who made these projects have for you.

- I would suggest them to use a high quality camera and be very concern about the voice recording because it is the most tricky part. My suggestion is to use an iPhone or a good sound recording device. The most important thing is that you must follow the instruction strictly. In other words, EP must study the instruction thoroughly. :)
- Make sure everyone know what role they are playing, choose the right EP who could give you clear direction and make clear decision. Make sure you survey the places before the actual shooting. Start shooting early and try to get as many clips as you can.(Some clips we thought it wasn't good turned out to be very useful) Contact the staff of the place before you go make the shooting and if its possible talk to the owner of the place can give you a lot of insight about the place. Stick to your schedule, try not to change your mind all the time. Make sure you have enough time for editing. Try to separate the video in to parts, so that you can have more people help editing and you can put them back together later. Try to keep everyone in the loop otherwise someone might have a nervous breakdown.
- You should survey, at least once, before the shooting so you know where to set the cameras, when is the time that has a little light, so you know when and where should you shoot your film.
- They should really start working on this project as soon as possible, because it will take longer time than we what we have expect. Communication and cooperation are the most important factors, this project will never get done if the members did not have good communication. Each members need to really sacrifice their time for this project. Even though it is a tough project, but after we have finished it we really get more than the grade, we gain more experience, know how to work within a large group and the most important one is we know each other better. Friendship is another important thing we get from this project.
- I think they should try to start the project early and also prepare for the worse case that can happen. The second choice should be considered just in case there is anything happen which will affect your project. As this year, there is a flood situation, our group has to change the topic which had already done for the screenplay. Without the help of each other in the group, the work would not be able to finish or finish with real bad quality. So the teammate is also play important role for this group project.
- We have to write a very good transcript and schedule, and after start shooting if the plan doesn't go well, you have to make a new plan. It's very important part. Also, you have to think about the transition because you might waste your time coming back to the place just for 1-2minute-shot
- It is not too easy but you have to put your effort to it, so you can get the best out of it. if it is not the best, but at least we have tried my best. this project is very helpful to learn many things such the angle, the noise and voice recorder, the place it self, and how to work with others in a group.

- **MOST IMPORTANT:** Read the instruction clearly twice before start doing the project - Plan and start earlier, so in case of emergency, you'll be just fine - Spent one day for surveying the whole place to find the most perfect scenes - For the editors: gather as much people in your team as possible when editing the video (at that time, you'll need a lot support and will power from friends in the group) - For others, Don't let the editors do their duty alone. Even though you've done your duty, the editors still need you to stay beside.
- be creative, think outside the box, make documentary not a tour program, have fun :)
- The subtitle is sometimes tricky. Make sure that your subtitle won't merge with the background. For example, you can add black outer layer for the white subtitle, avoiding it to disappear when some part of the screen is white. - Make sure that the pan motion is not shaky. You can use a tripod. - Soundtrack is very important to the video. Use various soundtrack according to each part (scene/theme) of the movie. - Sound quality - you need to make sure that the sound traffic or other things aren't louder than the MC or the audio.
- I recommend you to emphasize on this year's problems to the next year in order to remind them to improve their work just like we fixed the sound in this year. This work was rewarding... I learned new attitudes toward my coworkers. Our relationships actually improve because of this project. Please encourage the next year to give all effort in this work and they will be rewarded with a priceless pride, friendship, skills, and self-improvement!
- I think research is the critical part of this work. Well researched would take you to be more advantage than others. Including where or which type of angle would be good for any scene. These makes your video become more professional. Anyway team effort is the main part of how projects become successful.
- Everybody should be co-operate and open to other's idea so that the group work will perform well.
- I think the soundtrack should be interesting. And importantly, the surrounding sound like wind should not be interrupted.
- This is a group work so everyone should try their best to help their group. it is really meaning full when you get it done and you get to know more about your friend. Try to do the best doesn't matter how many time you have to restart things, at the end you will be proud of it.
- Be patient and be prepare for the emergency crisis like flood situation
- You should really beware of the noise in the outside which sometimes might disturb the speaker voice. - You should beware of the camera try to use the tripod to avoid the shake in the movie. - Try to pick the place that interesting so people won't get bored. - Don't make it too informative because people sometimes don't really care about all the detail (You should make it short but covered everything.) - And try to take a lot of footage VDOs because it really helpful!
- Try to be planning and do it right away because sometimes there would be some accidentally or uncontrolled factors like flooding crisis happened. So be planning and keep your schedule most effective.

- I think the main problem for this project is students' misinterpretation on 'what' to put in their videos. Some of the videos that were shown today seemed rather misleading, at least based on my own understanding of the assignment, they were not bad but they contain the articles which, I think, are almost totally random and irrelevant to their main topics. Many of them also lack key points to show the audience what their videos are actually presenting, no critical analysis on how things shown in their videos are connected together and promote logical conclusions, that is, lacking purpose -- just random guys showing up at random places doing random stuff. But those are just my opinions though and I know that the video from my group doesn't perfectly answer all these requirements either, so what I am trying to give as an advice is, make sure your video contains a point, a direction which you, the producers, are trying to lead the audience to. Because if it's only about eye-catching special effects combined with catchy tunes then it would just be a generic tv show, pointless, and not a documentary.
- be creative and cooperate
- try to learn to use more than 1 program, for example Photoshop will help you with decoration and Aftereffect will help you with special effects.
- Start working on the project as soon as possible. 2. be "into" it and you will get many things without realizing. 3. Be sure to have a friend that know how to edit the movie in your group.
- On weekend and weekday evening there would be crowded. If you want to shoot the movie quietly, you should choose proper time to go.
- Try to make this project as soon as possible. Do not wait for the last month because you will never know what is going to happen in the future. In our case, flooding is affecting every group and slowing down the work. And it will take times to editing the movie until you meet the quality you want.
- In next year, please recommend students to take a editor job for 3-4 people per group. Because I faced it was a hard work. And after assigning role, some of members shall done their own little job and never care about the work, that is really dispirited me.
- As it comes to root of the phrase "GROUP PROJECT", it means every of the group members should be participating actively in the work of their selection. Thus, I strongly recommend and advise other students to do their part well, so that other members don't need to bear with their unnecessarily extra tasks which they do not initially deserve to do. Be fair and do your best. :)
- I think you should carefully plan and research before getting the place. However, despite the good plan, the unexpected problems usually occur and the only a well-organized group can get through it. Lastly, I would like to suggest that trying to do it not only to be informative but to be creative and imaginative.
- They should start working on this project as early as possible because there may be some unexpected events like flooding happen. It's kinda be a problem for us.
- Try using good quality of video camera and choosing songs for the sound editing is also important, one song can dramatically change the mood of the movie.

- I suggest that students should choose group that they find easy to do work with such as group with close friends. Because they will be more participate and willing to do the work together. If the group is formed from acquaintance. Members are hard to say own ideas (they avoid contradicting to each others.) It is hard to support in brainstorming, so group will lose some good and beneficial ideas.
- I think they should plan before do the video and find the information well before. All members in group should help friends and group member have to participate this work because it will be really hard work if let 1 person done it.
- I suggest that they should done this work earlier, don't rush when it's near the due date because 1 time for shooting the video isn't enough (when you edited it, you will find that the video isn't good and enough and you may miss some part of them).
- Try your best and at the end, you'll know that it's worth trying for.
- The advice I would give to students is that to make a good movie, they should start with taking time to discover the whole place. Don't just only sit in front of the monitor, finding the information on the internet go see it with your own eyes. cause the more time they spend with in the place, the more inspirations and ideas they will acquire from it.
- This project gives many things for me not only how to work with the video but also the great thing is friendship. I would like to advise the future students to put all of your effort to this video as well as it's 30% of your score even though your mid term score isn't good enough, you can make your score better by this project. As I said above do it with your best, then the result would be good.
- For new student, this project is not easy going project. A lot of effort need to put in to this work and there is no joke about it because everyone in this year take it serious. Though you will learn many things about it and have fun even though you will be very tired.
- You have to try very hard and respect others.
- get started as soon as you can because you'll find tons of things that you've to deal with. - if you are going to film in an authorized place, it's most likely that you will have to have permission letter. It takes few days to get it and another a few days for the place to consider it so make sure you have spare time. - make sure you get opinions from all member of your group. Some are just shy to suggest their great ideas. - carefully plan of what you want to film so you don't have to waste time coming to the place again. - some places are noisy especially beside the road and it's annoying to watch. if you can't avoid it, make the dialogue short and have the MC speak really loud. - editing the video is extremely time consuming. prepare time for it. - beware about the subtitles. sometimes the background goes white as same as the subtitle color, this makes the subtitle not visible. - do your research carefully. not only look in the internet, go to the place and talk to the topic-related people. Sometimes they have the exclusive information that are really interesting and can't find elsewhere. - when choosing the topic, think about the filming also. don't choose noisy or overcrowded place because your dialogue maybe horrible. - write the storyboard to give the idea to every member. make them see the pictures of what the group

is going to do. - make sure you film everything you want before leaving the place

- We planned earlier and decided that we would go to Hua Lamphong twice after the introduction was done. The first time was a trial and see the mistakes we made. Indeed, we found out that without a tripod, the video would be shaky and we needed to improve next time. Due to the flood, some members could not attend the second filming day which is about 2 weeks after the first time of filming. We use iPhone for voice recording just like what you said. We can assure you that it really works for the actor who is in the crowded place. For the narrator, I recommend any digital camera for voice recording. I used Canon IXY digital 20IS, it's not a high end shooting camera but the recorded sound has great quality.
- choose the topic that you can search more information and the location is convenient to make a video; moreover, you must allocate your time properly because it spend more time to make this project completed.
- You should have done this project as early as possible because you wouldn't know what will happen, will there be any accident or natural disaster that interrupt your project as we did this year. Because of flood, we have to choose another place instead with in hurry and the tight time made us did every process with hurry and it used so much effort to do and had to spend a lot of time on the project. The long accidentally holiday affected us terribly made us had a little time to do because most of our members were back to their hometown in many provinces.
- They should start shooting the video as early as possible because it will give you more time to edit the video later and also in case an unexpected natural disaster happen like this year, it is best to avoid the problem by doing it earlier.
- I suggest that you should do this project as soon as you can, unless it will be a really tough work for you.
- Just to warn them that be aware of some unexpected situations. For us, it is also very rare that the natural disaster which is flooding has greatly impacted us. Transportation is harsh. Moreover, the evacuation from flooding separated everyone apart. If possible, whenever they had a chance to go by or pass those selected placed, they should film. It doesn't need to be one complete film recording, try to go often as it can provide them also several lights and techniques. Be also aware of the program and computer used to edit the video, try to clear the ram and the storage, use pretty high potential computer so as to avoid some frequent errors caused by the computers. Let them talk a lot within the group and try to choose the group they are greatly engaging with.
- I would suggest them to pick the topic that they think they would really enjoy working on it because they are going to go there many times. Moreover, if they enjoy working on it, their videos will come out just like what they expect. The other thing is that I would suggest them to share their work with other people in their group. I do not think that doing all the work by only some people in the group will make the work successful or come out very good. I would also recommend them to use an iPhone to record the sound. Last but not least, always share ideas with the group mates.

- Start the project early. Also, don't think that the project is hard or irrelevant to the program since it is quite an experience for me as I have discovered that I really like shooting and editing the film and might take extra class on the subject in the future. If I was lucky enough to have the opportunity.
- I think the most important part is editing the film which make your movie interesting.
- Be careful about the sound of the video, do not be careless in time that you've got ,and make sure that you have appropriate time to cut the movie.
- You all have to work as a team. Everyone should participate not only doing their part but also help the others as well. So that the project can be done easily and very fun. To do it together is better than working alone. And also remember to take care of all little details that may make your work come out more interesting and worthy.
- The story line of the movie is important, it should go smoothly while showing creativity in order to make your movie more interesting. It is quite hard to get high-quality sound especially during narration, great sound make great difference. High quality camera and speaker or recorder are recommended. Try to shoot the movie early don't wait until last minute because you may need to shoot some scenes again. Take effort doing this project and you will find it is worthy especially when you watch your own movie because you will feel proud of it and find every scene memorable.
- I would like to recommend them to prepare the sufficiently good devices for filming such as a video camera which can record high quality video, and sound recorder. Also if they would like to use more than one camera, they should select the cameras that have the same quality. It is easier when editing the video if the good devices was used. About the research, they should take a lot of research as much as possible, and should take a lot of videos and pictures when filming too. It is easier to cut something out when editing than filming again to get more videos.
- They should put a lot of effort in it. It's not that easy to make such videos. Many procedures must be made for it to be done. Spend a lot of time with it. Do a lot of research! :) (mostly on what the audience wants to know about the certain topics! )
- We should prepare the contingency plan for the worst case or unexpected situation, like the flooding situation we have faced.
- I would suggest to student that your team should collaborate and work together because every part and task of this movie is important. If one person lack of coordinate, the team can't create as efficient work.
- Have those who live near or comfortable to meet up easily work as editors .