

REPORT ON VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP HELD FOR STUDENTS OF MA in COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (C4D), TEZPUR UNIVERSITY, ASSAM. TEZPUR UNIVERSITY, BETWEEN JANUARY 29, AND FEBRUARY 16, 2019.

Facilitator: Rita Banerji

The facilitator is the founder of Dusty foots production, and a wildlife filmmaker with over fifteen years of experience. She is the only filmmaker from the Asian Sub-region to have a Green Oscar award to her name.

Currently she is the head and leader of Green Hub Assam, a video documentation organisation.

Participants: Participants are ten (10) Masters in Communication for Development (C4D) students of Tezpur University, Assam.

Purpose: The workshop was to shape the ability of students of MA Communication for Development in using Photography/video for social change initiatives

PHASE ONE: Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University

The workshop was in two phases. The early phase took place at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, with the final at Green Hub Video documentation Centre, Tezpur.

In totality, the workshop lasted for a two-week period; starting on January 29, 2019 and ended tentatively on February 16, 2019.



Insert: a picture of a class scene during the workshop

However, there had been intermittent breaks to allow students to undertake other academic activities of equal relevance when it was deemed fit.

As noted, the entire phase began on January 29, 2019, between the hours of 14:00 and 17:00. At the initial stages participants had the privilege of been familiarised with some renowned professionals in history, who had used video or photography as tools to champion social change.

Special reference in this regard was made to the works of Eugene Smith, a renowned photojournalist whose work had exposed the Chisso Corporation in Japan on how their indiscriminate release of mercury into water bodies had led to the infamous Minamata disease in 1971.

The facilitator emphasized that visuals- photography, videography is critical at complementing the written word. Visuals as she observed leaves a lasting impression than the written word.

“Visuals cross barriers of language. It cross countries and borders.”

Taking cognisance of the purpose for the workshop, there were screening sessions on some sampled short films, which recognizable was to help fill gaps created in the minds of the participants.

Essentially, this phase had catered for visual grammar, basic lens types and various photo/video techniques there are. Participants were taken through techniques like framing, rule of third, follow the gaze and angles- micro, close-up, wide shots in photo taking.

“...rule of thirds, like many other rules basically are rules designed by photographers over the years to serve as a guide on what defines a perfect photography...”

“...For the learning, this kind of rules help in assessing your won works. Rule of third is also known as the golden ratio...”

“...rule of thirds simply is about dividing the picture into three parts; horizontally, or vertical by placing the main character in focus...”

On lens, participants were introduced to block (50 mm fixed) and zoom lens (18-55mm), wide and tele-lens.

“If you know what your lens does then you will be able to use it better...”

*“... 18mm means a **wide lens**. 50 mm is your reference for **normal view**, normal eyes. Anything below 50 mm is moving closer to wide lens, meaning, I will see much with my eyes. As soon as you start moving above 50mm, you are moving into the **tele-lens**. Tele means, you moving closer and closer to the subject.”*

There were extensive video screening sessions to aid participants understanding of composition, and how applying the rules can help achieve it.

Emphases were laid on aperture, shutter speed and ISO; in light of exposure in video and photo taking.

According to the facilitator these session as a whole, purposefully, was to stimulate participants to the instrumentality of visuals in the communication process.

PHASE TWO: Green Hub Video Documentation Centre

This phase began on Friday, February 1, 2019 at the Headquarters of Green Hub, Tezpur, Assam.

This session was a furtherance on the one held at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University.

In comparison, it was more practical orientated. It allowed participants to implement the instructions on visual grammar, techniques and the rules as observed in their practical field filming sessions, which formed part of the workshop.

The crux of this session was an introduction to the basis of videography and editing for documentation. The class was taken through video terminologies like sequence, story and shots.

Accordingly, sequence was explained as the piecing together of two separate shots, with a full sequence defining a story.

“So anything which is the same location and are shots being put together defines one sequence...now in this classroom if I had to take a sequence of this classroom, all the shots which I take will be within this. I will take a wide, a close-up; I take someone walking... there is some class going on outside, if I take that then it is a separate sequence.”

According to Rita, every good sequence must include wide, medium and close-up shots. As stressed by her, this application will enhance audience understanding of the subject matter in consideration.



Insert: Practical field sessions at Green Hub, Assam.



Applying the above observation accordingly will also make the editing work seamless.

In order to have a practical sense of the above terminologies, participants were taken through some video works by Green Hub, with which better distinctions were made in relation to the explanations with regards to the terminologies.

Also, there was an introduction to the tripod and its relevance in the video recording process.

The tripod as identified would allow for steady shots, which in the parlance of the field is known as block shots. In the same breadth, an introduction was made to tripod movements like panning and tilting.

Tripod most especially in the video recording or picture taking process ensures the safety of the camera as much as possible.

Having laid the basis, participants were given the chance to make video recording with the expectation of applying all the theoretical considerations considered thus far. Upon which in teams of five, two each; an introduction was made to the Final cut pro editing tool.

Individual team members, one after each other, took their turn at practicing for themselves with the software. At the end of the workshop each team had produce an edited a full story with the incorporation of the techniques learnt.

At both phases of the workshop, participants were the end of each day of meeting, given a practical assignment with which the facilitator was able to evaluate the understanding of what has been taught on a particular.

This commonality equally gave participants the chance to appraise themselves against asking for further explanations in the face of misunderstandings.

The workshop officially came to an end at 6:00pm on February16, 2019.