SJSU 11

Interviewer: I'd like to begin by exploring how you teach with video content including VHS, DVD, and the content provided through streaming platforms. Do you currently use any video content in your classes?

Interviewee: Yes. I use less of it now than before, but I have some VHSs that I own. I have some DVDs that I own. I have some DVDs that I’ve rented from the library or from the computing resource center. I use a lot of streaming resources right now, so Academic Video Online, which used to be Alexander Street, Intellicom, Films on Demand, and Kanopy. I’ve used them in various ways so sometimes I have used them to supplement course lecture materials. Sometimes we watched a part of a documentary in class and had class discussion. Other times it is kind of assigned as part of a discussion that will happen online. So they watch the film first online and then discuss in typewritten form through the online discussion forums. My asynchronous classes run more heavily on documentary films and instructional videos. And I even create some of my own content that way. So I would say that it is a primary medium that I use for instructional content in my courses.

Interviewer: So for the DVDs and tapes that you still use, is it because they are just not available online?

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And in some cases, I’ll even survey students on what kind of platforms they might have, like Netflix or Amazon Prime or Hulu, and I will mention, “These are optional since we don’t have access to them, but there is a new documentary on Netflix related to our class in xyz way, and if you can watch it, that would be great” or “This is supplemental on Amazon Prime, there is an old copy of xyz video for $1.99 if you want to get together as a group and watch that, that would be great.” But those are harder and far and few between because of the pandemic and the logistics of getting everyone in one place.

Interviewer: Too true. For which classes do you use this content in?

Interviewee: All of my classes are built in one way or another around video content. So for Psych 142, which is the child psychopathology class, I use various videos on autism spectrum and on clinical assessment and diagnosis. In my Psychology of Women course there are just a plethora of gender studies based materials on Kanopy. I also use YouTube clips and videos, TED Talks, things like that. In my AFAM 22 class, that class is all about African-American history and culture so we listen to a lot of songs either through the YouTube video of the clip or a lyric video or a live recording of a performance. For my Psychology of the Family class, we watch a couple of documentaries. One of them I have just a personal copy of through Amazon and then others we’ve watched I’ve purchased personal copies of the film from YouTube. So paid the $9.99 or whatever it is and we’ve watched those in class and talked about them in class. So those kinds of things are harder to do in an online format because there is not a way to stream it. There is also some challenge around streaming the Kanopy stuff inside of the Zoom meeting that I’ve run into so students will say “we can hear it, we can see the captions, but we can’t see the visual display.”

Interviewer: Or the other way around! It’s generally one or the other.

Interviewee: Right, right, right. So the “A” and the “V” not fitting together in AV needs. But I’ve tried to, not only in recognition of people being visual learners, but I happen to be a lover of documentary as a medium so I watch them constantly and find them to be very thought-provoking. Even if I’m watching something on the weekend, I might say “Hey, I’m watching this thing on Netflix, and it so relates to our class in this way. So if you have a chance, take time to watch it” kind of thing. And students also bring stuff to me. They’ll share with me what they’ve seen and encourage me to watch, and I’ll tell them how busy I am. But I listen to it and I appreciate the value of visual media in learning.

Interviewer: How does the content contribute to the pedagogical goals of the class?

Interviewee: Most of my classes are societal based or related classes where we look and critically analyzed how race and gender and class and socioeconomic status and disability status and nationality and other areas of social identity impact the landscape of those peoples’ experiences and so I utilize videos to help students create their own narratives around their own lived experiences. I also have them find parallels comparisons, similarities or differences in what they viewed in the film to what their experience has been. I’ve used from a historical perspective like for example today in class I was talking about John Singleton’s film “Higher Learning” which came out in the early 1990s. And if you were to watch that film you would think it was 2022 because the landscape of the film centering racial tensions on campus, police brutality baclk and brown students being marginalized, sexual assault being swept under the rug on a college campus, he wrote all of those into a film 30 years ago. And we’re still talking about Title IX and freedom and liberty for all in 2022. So when I look back at that film, I not only look at it as a culturally iconic moment of my upbringing but also as something I can share with the new generation of students who haven’t previously been exposed to it but if they take the time to watch it see just the similarities. So that is one of the ways that I bring in film to class.

Interviewer: How do you determine which video content you use in your classes?

Interviewee: Sometimes it depends on length. So if it’s for a required assignment, I might be more cognizant that it is 50 minutes or less. If it is something I’m showing in class, I’m going to do 7 minutes or less. So the length of the piece: if it is able to be something that I can clip or send out to students directly. I believe heavily in redirecting my students to the library so I would say 98% of the content used in my class is through the library or through a similar facing portal. So for example, I’ve been encouraging students, if it is something we don’t have in Kanopy to try and see if from the public library side or the county library system. So students have several library accounts and they are using them to siphon through information because I understand our budget constraints so if there is another way for me to get the content to students, I will certainly share it with them. But I am also very dedicated to making sure that it is accessible and publicly shareable, legally shareable copy. So I tell students “look, if y’all have a link, but all of the stuff I have on the website is all legit.”

Interviewer: So at what point in developing a course do you identify opportunities to include this content? Do you typically have very specific titles in mind?

Interviewee: Yes, so I usually do my course development before the semester. A couple of my courses I’ve been lucky to run now several times. So it’s more like how can I improve this module or what can I take out of this module. Some of my courses, like Psychology of Women, is content-rich. So I never know what is the right balance of film and this and that and this reading and that poem. So some students see that as an opportunity to really pick the things that they value and want to look at. Other people feel it’s overwhelming, especially those students who feel like I’m supposed to do everything. Just tell me what to do. So they’ll follow, and I’m like, there are 24 documentaries in there! I wasn’t expecting you to watch all of those. I was expecting you to look at the summaries, see which ones stood out to you, and watch that. Right? Or if there was something that was confusing about what you read in the book or what we talked about in lecture, watch that video. So I’ve really tried to adopt a style where students are able to take self-initiation of deciding what kinds of materials are helpful to them. And then there are times where they are required, stating hey, make sure you watch this video. We’re going to talk about it in class on Tuesday. Being more explicit about which ones are required versus optional.

Interviewer: Oh, so we’ve kind of gone over this: Where do you typically look for content?

Interviewee: The library, county system libraries. The library catalog. And then I’ll do those external ones. Like HBO. I spend a lot of time watching HBO, and I think they’ve had a good track record of documentary filmmaking. So I’ll pull some of those into class or mention them to students.

Interviewer: Okay. To what extent does the quality of the platform, like does it have captioning, does it have transcripts, can it be embedded, that kind of thing. How does that factor into your decision to use a particular video in class?

Interviewee: I definitely am intentional about checking for captioning, which has significantly hindered what I can use on something like YouTube. I would probably say 98% of what I’ve come across at the library has been appropriately captioned. There are a few videos here and there that didn’t have anything but they were all like 1980s or before. That is one trend that I’ve seen across those types of videos. Captioning is important, being able to share it or embed it in my course is another important element. Being able to draw critical thinking questions from it and develop those for course content. And also I think about diversity representation. A lot of the older educational videos in psychology, for example, are all white folks. So trying to be representative in a new way. So I might say “This video is still pertinent in terms of content, but also notice that all the human examples don’t represent the diversity which we now would see.” So that’s the drawback of the video. It’s the boring white man speaking to the screen, which is very different than me as their professor. So students appreciate those kinds of critiques or feedback, and I certainly try to be very intentional about bringing in the voices that aren’t usually centered and stories that aren’t usually centered. So making sure that I’m representing different cultural communities. Like one thing in my Psychology of Women class, when we think about women, we don’t regularly think about Muslim women’s experiences in the United States. So that’s a way to … so I might really include or require a documentary where we watch someone other than people of Christian values and how they experience gender in the United States.

Interviewer: Do you consult with any other people to identify opportunities to incorporate video content into your classes?

Interviewee: Not really. I mean, I think you were the one who told me about Kanopy many years ago.

Interviewer: Likely. I’ve been here a long time.

Interviewee: I was like, “Oh, this is great.” I added all this stuff. Then we find out the budgetary constraints and so I have to remove stuff or find alternatives to it. So that’s still hard. And explaining to my students. I checked all this, the videos may work now but they may expire at some point. Week 3 when we need it. Trying to help them navigate that. But I haven’t really consulted with any colleagues about which videos to show or not show. I’ve really been independent in terms of developing my courses.

Interviewer: So not like an English 1A, where there is a cohort?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: So to what extent are your current needs for incorporating video content into your courses being adequately met?

Interviewee: It’s similar to what I just said. I would love to be able to have the full libraries of all the things we have available. But I realize that that is not there. I would also love to know when something is working or expired because then I could adjust the calendar around that. But traditionally, I’ve kept things kind of in the same order. So I think the workarounds that I’ve had in terms of like getting students to sign up for a Santa Clara County library account and seeing if we can get it through Kanopy there. Or students who live in San Francisco, doing the San Francisco library account and seeing if they can watch it through there. Those have been ways to work around the limitations we have at the university level.

Interviewer: Yes, it was interesting. We were in a meeting with Kanopy recently, libraries around the country, and “please tell us what is going to expire” was the main ask. We can’t see on our side either, and it’s just maddening. So you are not alone. And Has the pandemic changed your needs for incorporating video content into your courses in any way?

Interviewee: Absolutely. I would say it’s probably increased the demand as students are moving to more asynchronous learning. And the other piece of that is the reality is that I as the instructor do not have endless hours to create my own content. And when there are things already out there that are pre-existing, it would be lovely to refer students to that as a resource, not only so that they are getting a diversity of voice but also so that all of the responsibility of instruction is not on the instructor.

Interviewer: Yes, those videos are time consuming to make. And are there any recent examples where you encountered barriers to incorporating specific content into your class? Like something was unavailable, the copyright was messy, anything like that.

Interviewee: You know, the biggest drawback here is the inability to caption YouTube properly and there are really some great things on there from clinical psychologists but they are not video captioned, so I cannot use them in my class. And it is such a loss from that perspective. A loss of information. And I think it also speaks to ableism. When we’re creating videos we don’t necessarily think about how does the information I’m sharing transfer to someone who is hearing impaired or visually impaired? And so that part for me, although I’m trying to be much more conscious about it, I haven’t found that the infrastructure of the university is really set up to support that, even when it comes to captioning my own stuff. So it’s like if I create a video, I have to caption it, I have to make sure that everything was spelled correctly, here’s more time, and I’m supposed to somehow be grading and lecturing and everything else. So while the desire for having an outlet around that is always there, it would be great if we had some other options or supports that would allow for it to be really done for our courses, especially on my courses to not only be done, but done well. Fully accessible to all students and their learning needs.

Interviewer: YouTube has the auto generated captions, which can be very entertaining sometimes.They can get down right funny. Next, I’d like to learn more about how your expectations are evolving around how video content can be incorporated in your classes.So Has the availability of streaming content changed how you integrate video content into your teaching?

Interviewee: I think, yes. As I mentioned before, just losing certain content because of different constraints around funding has probably been the biggest piece. I think at one point when I learned that libraries moved into streaming, I like over-streamed my classrooms. And now it’s like, uh oh, that’s not there. This is gone, that is gone. Oh, I really loved that video. Or in the case of, I think it is Intellicom, how they went out of business or deleted all their old videos. And I would show some of these things as classics. So what has changed since then? In my classes and losing that is disappointing. My students always laugh when I show them an old Learning Seed video. The silly music in the beginning and neon wording, neon key terms at the bottom of the screen. But I show these to them not only as cultural points in time, but also for the content that’s still so vital to how they understand our field and our discipline. I have a love of history, I’m not a historian, but I have this love for history. But I like saying, look how far we’ve come. We're now in the special effects age, and before someone literally had to type that on a card and hold it up to the screen.

Interviewer: And what you see or what you see as the greatest benefits of streaming content for your teaching?

Interviewee: Greatest benefits are that students can do it on their own time. It is available 24/7. It adds to without necessarily duplicating content we’ve shared in class. It enriches the experience by allowing for students to hear various perspectives. It's a point where students can absorb something without necessarily having to do anything on their end. So, you know, I can't write this paper right now but I can watch this film. I see it as a valuable learning opportunity for students in my classes.

Interviewer: So the next question is about any downsides to streaming content, which we kind of touched on, so the licenses expiring. Anything else?

Interviewee: I think accessibility of connections for students is also one. And everyone's Wi-Fi is not strong. Videos take up a lot of bandwidth. Video content that maybe is not transcribed in multiple languages. It’s like some captioning will just have the English format, but what if a student learns better in a different language? That captioning element is not there.

Interviewer: Like Netflix has multiple options. You also mentioned the interoperability with Zoom where sometimes it's just a black screen?

Interviewee: Yeah, sometimes you can just hear the audio, and it’s the black screen. I don't know if that's like a security thing on Kanopy’s side or a security thing on Zoom’s side, but I think I click all the buttons to optimize the video, and it still doesn't work. So those things are missed opportunities, especially if it is something I own in my private collection and I'm trying to share it with students virtually. They can't come in and get the DVD from me, you know, nor can I mail the DVD to 35 students. You know then we missed out on that.

Interviewer: And you're stuck.

Interviewee: Yeah, and I'm stuck and I'm doing it in the middle of class, which was just taking away class time of like, oh, technical problem!

Interviewer: Yes, Plan B! Been there. Is there anything that could be improved about streaming content and or functionalities to maximize the opportunities to incorporate it into your teaching?

Interviewee: So teaching in the African American Studies Department, there are videos that are captions but not correct because they're not picking up on African American dialects. So literally something like “taking care of a child,” right, was read as “taking care of a job.” If you think about “child” and “job,” they have that same one syllabic sound.

Interviewer: So the pronunciation was just different enough. Interesting.

Interviewee: So we were reading the captions, I’ll send the video to you so you can see it yourself, but I was like “Are you all seeing these captions? Because this is not right.” So that kind of thing, I wonder how frequently that occurs. I’ve seen it in a couple of films so far. Was the person captioning not familiar with the ways of communicating?

Interviewer: Or was it not a human, was it a bot?

Interviewee: Or was it AI? Or something else. So in that way I still felt this was not up to par, but at the same time do I have 80 hours to watch every single film and make sure that it is correct? No!

Interviewer: Somewhere out there some student is reading that caption and going “what?!”

Interviewee: So that is what I think is a drawback.

Interviewer: And has the availability of streaming content changed your expectations about how the costs of the video content should be covered?

Interviewee: I never thought about costs of anything related to the library until this whole Kanopy situation. Like, I have always since I was 3 had a library card, and I just didn’t see those things as costs. I saw them as priceless value to the community, as learning. So I guess those books are bought and put on the shelf, but it wasn’t something that I had an inkling to consider. So in that regard, as libraries are budgeting lower and not seen as cash-generating parts of the institution, it comes at a loss to everybody because what we’re in essence saying is limited learning is okay with us and not expansion of learning and a plethora of resources. And is that a value as a higher education institution that I want to uphold? No! So that part feels ridiculous.At the same time to hear that every film costs $300, $400, $500 also feels insane. Right? So there has to be some medium by which we’re able to get information out in this full digital information age and that it is not of one voice and of one view or one world view. So that is what I see as a challenge for us going forward.

Interviewer: So are there any instances where it is acceptable to require students to access video content for educational purposes.

Interviewee: No. That is what the library is for. Again, if they have an optional service like cable TV, HBO, Showtime, or Hulu, or something like that, I don’t require those things. I mention them as available, if you happen to have this luxury item. But I don’t see the library as a luxury item. I see it as a basic necessity of learning. So in that way I also try to transfer my love of the library to other students by sending them there all the time to get things.

Interviewer: Well, the service that you’ve done! Half of the students probably didn’t know that libraries had videos. So just that right there is huge. And how do your expectations with video relate to your expectations for how other forms of course content are paid for? Like textbooks, journal articles, anything else like that.

Interviewee: I think textbooks have become part of the norm of fees for students. I certainly try to combat rising textbook costs by using OER and stuff like that. Journal articles, same thing. Being able to get a PDF for students, or share with them a permalink to the library for the journal article. These are such vital parts of their learning experience and having them all in one place like we do at our school here feels not only efficient but just a great supportive tool for their learning. So that’s how I view those things. I tell my students, don’t pay for anything while you are here! I don’t care if it is $12.99 on Google. You better send that link to the librarian and get your article for free.

Interviewer: I work with business students, and they just get it coming and going for business content. Don’t pay! I preach the same thing. So what are the top factors that you think are important for determining the extent to which the university covers the costs of video content?

Interviewee: Their necessity for courses. Instructors requesting it. Number of courses it can be transferable across. And maybe number of views. But I also find, if I’m not teaching a large class, that may not be a good determining factor whether it was a valuable purchase or not. I think we should invest proportional to the courses that are offered in that particular section. So we have a large social science college, we have a large business school, etc. so we have to have content in those areas that really support our at least stated mission of the university and what the learning goals are. And then I think instructors should also be able to request and get “yeses” for when we need certain things. I haven’t had much, if at all, “No, we can’t get that” at San Jose State, but I’ve certainly gotten it at other schools where the librarians over-explain the budget to me. And I as an instructor say, “I hear you and I don’t care because I just want to get this for my students.” It’s not like I’m hanging out on the weekend having a movie night. It’s that I want them to see this thing. So that’s been challenging.

Interviewer: Which part of the university should cover those costs?

Interviewee: I guess it should come through Academic Affairs, the provost. I think the subject librarian should be able to speak to and are keeping abreast of new stuff that’s out there, things that we need to add to our catalog. I feel like and I know why this happens because clearly these companies wouldn’t exist anymore, but it really is a scan that students have to have five and six and seven and eight library accounts to hunt around for stuff that every university has. So I bought a copy of it and the other 22 CSUs bought a copy of it, so how much are making off that one thing, you know?

Interviewer: An excellent question. I could tell you. That’s honestly covering these costs this is what this survey and this whole project is around because it’s getting just …. Anyway. What kinds of resources or other supports would help you identify and assess opportunities for including video content into your classes? You mentioned librarians…

Interviewee: Librarians are helpful. Having real time to talk with colleagues about how they structure their courses. A lot of us may teach the same courses but we don’t necessarily collaborate or look at each other's Canvas pages or any of that. I think the biggest part with me is just keeping up with the database, whether it is still something we have or not.

Interviewer: Yes, has it gone “poof.” Always exciting in the middle of the semester. And would additional information about pricing structures, available titles, or format types affect your decision-making about what content to assign?

Interviewee: I mean if there is an exorbitant cost to students, I wouldn’t want to transfer that to students, but as I said before, I have a real problem with academic life embodying scarcity. And always saying, “We don’t have. And there’s not money for that.” And again, it’s always that there is not money for *that*. It’s never not that there is no money. So I think we have got to return to the values of what we claim we want or be more explicit that we actually aren’t here to be a non-profit institution. We want to be like the University of the Pacifics of the world.

Interviewer: Ideally, all of this information about pricing and titles and formats, how would you like to get this information and from whom?

Interviewee: I guess if it was pertinent to me it would come from subject librarians, but again I don’t feel like the instructors should have to manage budgetary constraints around learning resources. And nor do I think that the students should have to. And I feel like the librarians should have an endless budget of what’s needed. In that case, it’s like it’s nobody’s responsibility. We need to fund this adequately. Period.

Interviewer: I’d like to finish up with a few questions that put your perspectives into the broader context of your field and look towards future developments and needs. How does your use of video content in your teaching compare to the practices of your peers?

Interviewee: I don’t know. I know that I have mentioned to people Kanopy and stuff like that and some people appeared to not be aware of those services. I consider myself probably on the more shifting side of willing to move to these mediums. That some of the other professors who have been here a long time and are like, “What’s Zoom?” So there is a different realm of where we are in terms of our professional lives which may have also driven some of the content. But like I said, I grew up in the song, guitar music, waterfall running, learning infomercial environment, so I still love incorporating some of that with these more newer digitized films. But I don’t know how other people use content. I imagine a lot of people rely on you too but don’t know the ADA requirements around that or don’t care. Knowledge is power, so as I learned about what the problems are with that, I’ve tried to move away from that as much as I can.

Interviewer: Are there any kinds of video content or functionality that you would like to see more of?

Interviewee: I think a captioning service. We have one in Studio, which is nice. Again, I would have to be doing my own content. I think there is some finicky stuff with Films on Demand, like it doesn’t embed into Canvas, it just shows a gray box. Or sometimes the URL is broken or something so I’ve had problems mostly with that platform. Kanopy just locks you out when you haven’t paid for it. So that is something that I’ve noticed. I think just the disappearing act of films. That’s really like, let me forget all of this.

Interviewer: Yes, I could see if you were new to it, I could see it being very discouraging. And are there any developments in the areas that you teach that may affect how you or your peers would like to teach with video content in the next five years?

Interviewee: I know that we have some counseling and psychology videos. Again some of them are older than others. I could certainly see the necessity for more things around teletherapy and telemedicine. That is no longer the outsiders, it is becoming more the mainstream form of care. So having video content on that. In African-American discipline, a lot of the classic videos again are from the 1990s so how have things shifted since then? What kind of nuances might be addressed in documentary films? And the like. Those are things that I would say are shifts that I would want to see video content created around.

Interviewer: And last question: Is there anything else that is important for me to know about how you or your peers incorporate video content into teaching? Any last thoughts?

Interviewee: Not right now. I hope my enthusiasm and love of the library comes through.

Interviewer: Yes, very much. It is greatly appreciated. Well, just taking the time to do this!

Interviewee: And just desiring for us to be able to give students the best learning experience possible with a variety of different options for that learning to transfer over. The library is the foundational element of that. That’s what I would hope. The companies need to stop price gouging, y’all, and the university needs to give libraries appropriate levels of funding so that we can get the things we need for our classes, and our students.

Interviewer: Good last words.