

**Using Homegrown Video to Support PBS Initiatives**  
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**Hardware & Software Suggestions & Requirements**

- **Digital Video Camera**—whether it records to tape or internal hard drive doesn't matter as long as it can connect and download to your computer (mini DV is what I have). Many new cameras film in HD, this is not necessary, but the price has come down a ton in the past few years. I buy Canon cameras (Canon HV 40: \$800), but Sony, Panasonic, or JVC all make nice products. Bottom Line: You get what you pay for.
- **Computer with Video Editing Software**—Any modern computer (something you bought it in the past 2-3 years) likely has the processing capacity to handle digital video editing. Where you may have trouble is with hard drive storage space (see below). Most computers also come with pre-installed video editing software (Macs have iMovie, Windows have MovieMaker). There are other, fancier (i.e. more expensive) video production products you can buy. I have a MacBook Pro 15' laptop. I use iMovie instead of a more expensive product. Your school is likely to already have the hardware and software needed. You want to make sure the wire that connects the camera to the CPU matches at least one port on your computer (e.g. USB 2.0, firewire, etc.). The helpful sales associate at Best Buy can help with this.
- **External Hard Drive**—Digital video files can be fairly big, especially if you film in HD. I have several external hard drives (LaCie makes a nice product) to hold my old videos. You can get cheaper options at Best Buy. The smallest I would recommend buying if you think you'll be making a series of videos is 500gb, if not 1 terabyte.
- **Microphone**—Audio is a huge deal when it comes to video. I have an external microphone that I have bought separate from the camera, but attaches to the camera using the microphone/headset jack. I have a Rode Shotgun Mic (about \$200) that I am pleased with.
- **Tripod**—Buy one. Wal-Mart or Target will have something that'll do.

**Writing, Planning, and other Considerations to keep in mind**

- It isn't a good idea to make a video because it looks like fun. You and your team should be able to identify a clear need based on your data, and tie the content of the video to the data.
- When writing clips, use a team. Use students too. Let kids do the whole thing if you can! I used to be horrifically guilty of this—don't be a hero and try to do it all alone.
- Filming doesn't take a lot of time, but you will likely not have a lot of time either. Whoever is directing the video needs to have a comprehensive and tight schedule to make sure you film what you need in the time allotted. On that note: Someone has to be the director. Whoever it is should know about video & PBS to go along with infinite patience.
- Writing a word-for-word script is helpful, but not needed. Often times I give my 'actors' an idea of what I want, and then let them ad-lib the rest. Whether or not this works depends on your talent and the director's instructions. Tape is cheap—film until you get it right!

- Someone you know will know how to produce video. It might be a teenager. Find them and buy them gifts. Often. If this person also knows about PBS, even better.
- Use a tripod—nobody wants to get seasick when watching your video. Pay attention to details like audio and lighting. You can't fix these issues afterwards and they ruin good ideas.
- Use the “Will I get fired if I show this clip in public” test. If the answer is “Maybe”, don't do it. I have used this rule many times and deleted many very funny clips. Breaks my heart every time, but is necessary.
- Pay attention to who is in your videos. A criticism I hear quite a bit is that the people in my video are all Caucasian. This isn't intentional; yet the most frequent volunteers in the schools I've worked in have been white females on student council. Finding and including students from other backgrounds is my challenge to you. Make your videos look like your school.
- A tried and true method for me is the “teacher as student” and “student as teacher” role reversal. It works for comedy, and allows both sides to see how silly behaviors can look.
- When taking on issues that faculty are sensitive about, be cautious about how you address them. Video is supposed to be fun and effective, but when feelings get hurt nobody wins.
- Goes without saying—don't include anyone in your films if you don't have permission.
- Don't make a video and expect it to change the world by itself. You must couple your video with lesson plans, and other instruction in order to really make behavioral changes.
- Video can be used to address student behaviors, teacher behaviors or both. Be clear about the intent and audience for each clip and shape the content/humor/message accordingly.
- When you film a clip, always “film it both ways”. Show it the wrong way for comedic effect, then, show it the right way. Use narration to really emphasize key points.
- If your school has a video production department, class, or whatever, get the teacher(s) on the PBS team and “employ” the class to help with your needs.
- This should be fun. It can be fun. However, it is not all fun and games... Again, review your data, make team decisions, and write scripts that reflect the data-identified problem and the perspective of the entire PBS team. Include as many faculty members and students as you can. Find someone who can produce video and make them your best friend. Good Luck!
- I am available to lend whatever support I can. Please email me with any comments or questions. KennedyM@ku.edu. I also do birthdays.