

Tips for Creating Instructional Videos

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On an ever increasing basis Purdue faculty are creating and incorporating instructional videos into their courses. Some of the purposes faculty have shared for creating the videos include, recording lectures, supplementing course materials, reviewing content, introducing/recording a guest speaker, and demonstrating a process. With that in mind, I decided to research this topic and ask colleagues for tips that would help guide faculty members in their video creation efforts.

Pre-Production



Define the video purpose. Defining a goal will help you identify what you are trying to accomplish and frame the production process. For example, some instructors use videos to “bridge” concepts being learned from week to week. A video such as this would differ from one whose purpose is to introduce a new topic.

Create a script and practice. This will help you sound professional and avoid the ‘uh’ or ‘ah’ sounds.

Know your audience. Is your audience comprised of adults or traditional students? Is the topic you will discuss familiar to your audience? Knowing the answer to these and other demographic questions will help you craft an effective video.

Consider video length. Your videos should be between less than six minutes in length. However, if the topic being addressed is complex, the videos may extend longer than this recommended time. If you find the video extends longer, give the audience something to do. For instance, add interactivity into the video by having the learner answer a question about the topic being discussed. This strategy will help keep the audience engaged and reflective about what they are learning.

Check your video lifespan. If you have changed textbooks or the included examples in the video are no longer relevant, then the video should be replaced. A

recommended strategy is to have a video review process in place that will enable you to systematically review and update video files.

Establish a naming convention. Give video files a practical name so that the learners can readily identify content. For instance, it is easier for learners to understand the contents of this file, “Spanish_101_Introductions.mp4” is easier than this one “class_video1.mp4.”

Control nervous movement. Shaky video or nervous habits, such as swaying back and forth or jerking the mouse pointer across the screen, are distracting to the audience. So practice limiting your movements in front of the camera.

Production



Workspace Organization. Make sure that your desktop and the background are free from clutter. If there are too many items on your desktop or if your background is “busy”, then your audience may become distracted and not listen to the topic being discussed.

Lighting. Make sure that you have proper lighting in your recording area. Proper lighting will help ensure that you have good image quality and that your audience can see your workspace, background, and other items pertinent for the discussion.

Audio. Record your video in a quiet setting and using a good quality headset or external microphone to record your video. You want to ensure that your audience can clearly understand what you are saying for the length of the video.

Use clear and concise language. Talk in a conversational tone. Make sure your audience understands what they watched and why.

Make eye contact with the camera. Do not just read your slides. When speaking look into the camera, this action will enable your audience to connect with you.

Stay Focused. If you lose your train of thought, the potential is there to lose the audience. Developing a script and practicing will help in this effort.

Show what you are talking about. Instead of talking about a process, show how the process works within a given context. For instance, if you are talking about how to access the syllabus in Blackboard Learn, use an application, such as Camtasia, to show the screens and keystrokes that will enable them to complete the work.

Dress for the Camera



Do: Choose neutral or solid colors, instead of tight patterns, such as stripes, plaids, checks, or high contrast patterns etc.

Don't: Wear highly reflective clothing or clothes or jewelry that make noise when you move. This noise will be distracting to the audience.

Post Production



Include captions and/or a transcript. Captions allow you to meet federal accessibility standards for learners with special needs. ([See Rehabilitation Act – Section 508](#)). In addition, providing captions and transcripts address the needs of students with diverse learning styles, such as those who prefer to read text or are non-native speakers.

Obtain constructive feedback. Have a peer review your video and utilize the feedback shared to improve your video.

Distribution