

Instructional Video Making

What kind of instructional videos do students actually watch?

Videos with high numbers of views have direct connections to course assignments. Here are some ways to connect video content to assignments/ assessments:

- Include content in the video that is required for an assignment or discussion board post.
- Create a video that is a prototype of a key course assignment.

How long should I make my videos?

Several studies, including one out of Columbia University, have reported that the average amounts of time that viewers watch media (in aggregates) is roughly 4 minutes. This is true across programs and courses, even when considering longer-form videos. The general recommendation is to create videos that are 6 minutes or less.

Trying to recreate a classroom on the internet by producing 45-minute lectures isn't going to work. If you're creating longer-form lecture content, consider chunking it into shorter content segments.

How to decide what to topics to make videos for?

Here are the criteria I use:

- Any topic that students routinely misunderstand on assignments or in class.
- Any concepts delivered more effectively with visuals.
- Any topics or concepts that students can't just read as text.
- Directions for how to navigate the course and directions for major assignments.
- To provide feedback on assignments, such as using "A" student work to model an element of a discussion board or assignment that students' struggled with.
- To answer complicated student questions that I think other students might also be wondering about in online classes.
- Videos I can reuse, but still make relevant for each specific class.

Tips on Video Style:

- Avoid being a talking head. Add in audio visual elements to support the content.
- Use conversational language and humor.
- Speak quickly and with enthusiasm.
- Use real life examples/ scenarios.
- Be certain that you're not backlit and it is quiet where you're filming.

Easy Instructional Video Methods/ Tools:

If your computer has a camera and a microphone you can easily make videos. There are 3 very easy basic kinds of videos you can make with just some simple (and free or inexpensive) software: screencasting, animations, and narrated powerpoint slides.

You can also have your students use these tools create videos. I've had online students use Screencast-o-matic (which is free and easy to use) to make and then post on youtube short research presentations.

1. Screencasting:

This is a technique where you can record your computer screen while adding in a voice over. Some screencasting tools – like Screencast-o-matic – allow you to both record your computer screen and have a tiny talking head of yourself in the bottom corner of the screencast video.

- Screencast-o-matic (Free version as well as pro): <http://screencast-o-matic.com/home>
- Camtasia: <http://tinyurl.com/zjl9qtd>
- RecordIt: <http://tinyurl.com/hzjgbpt>

2. Animations:

The software is surprisingly easy to use and it comes with things like built-in images, text, and music. Animations are also incredibly engaging. If you haven't ever seen any of the Khan Academy videos on youtube take a look and get inspired.

- Adobe Spark: <https://spark.adobe.com/features/> (Educators can get the entire Adobe Create Cloud Suite for \$19/ year)
- PowToon: <https://www.powtoon.com/index/> (They have a free version.)
- VideoScribe: <http://www.videoscribe.co> (They have a free trial period so you can play around before you buy.)
- GoAnimate: <https://goanimate.com> (They have a free trial period so you can play around before you buy.)

3. Narrated Slides:

If you have PowerPoint or Keynote presentations it is easy to record an audio narration by pressing the Record Slide Show button. Both allow you to save your presentation as a movie.

- Powerpoint directions: <http://tinyurl.com/z8ar9dz>
- Keynote directions: <https://help.apple.com/keynote/mac/7.0/#/tan79a8f6388>

General Reading Recommendations:

Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University, "Effective Educational Videos," by Cynthia Brame <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/effective-educational-videos/>

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, "Creating an Effective Online Instructor Presence," April 2013 <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED542146.pdf>