Video lecture guidelines

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Since 2003, I have created and viewed hundreds of screencasts every month: about ICT, linguistics, snowboarding and playing squash . Over the years, I have picked up a few tips and tricks that might help you to get started. When creating a video lecture for your students, a high-quality end-product will hold their attention for longer and aid you in your present and future teaching. With just a little extra effort (and insight) you can go a long way towards improving your final product. Here, then, are 10 guidelines for creating high quality video lectures.

1. Create an outline of your recording

Don't wing it. Make a rough guideline so that you have a structure (a roadmap if you like). So, no jumping back and forth between your random thoughts. Similarly, there is no need for a detailed manuscript. Make you video lecture as natural and life-like as possible … but with structure and some forward planning.

2. Keep it short

If your lecture is normally 45 minutes long in real life, then make 2 or 3 recordings of 15-20 minutes each instead. It is easier to redo a shorter lecture than a longer one.

3. Record in a quiet environment

No strange background noises of your dag barking or your colleagues speaking. Use a room that has books and curtains that can 'swallow' sound so your audio does not sound hollow.

4. Use a microphone, and test it EVERY time you make a recording

How many times have I completed my video lecture only to discover that the microphone was not switched on OR that the input volume was too low. Video lectures with poor audio quality are hard to listen to. You don't need an expensive, top-range microphone. Simply using basic headset with a built-in mic is very much better than only using your computer's internal microphone.

5. Close all other apps and tabs

Use only those applications that you will be using in your video lecture. This will do two things:
  (1) free your computer's processing power so that your video recording software runs smoothly, and
  (2) eliminate distractions (eg mail notifications) for you and also for the end-user

Also, If the content of your screencast is contained in application (eg Powerpoint) , then don't record your entire desktop. Only record the part of the that you need.

6. Create a branded first slide - make it personal and professional

Brand yourself. Preferably with a cool pic of yourself with a transparent background. Have a standard first page for your video lectures. Maybe a different coloured first page for different subject areas. If you - at some stage - allow your colleague to use your video lecture then at least get the fame!

7. Tell your viewers what you will cover, and then what you have covered

Before you get solidly into the content of your video lecture, give your audience an idea of what they will learn. Or … what questions they will be able to answer once the have seen the video. And then repeat the same thing at the end of the video; that is, say what you have covered or what questions students should now be able to answer.

8. Post-edit your video recording

Before uploading your video to your streaming service… post-edit it. Cut out the dead moments. Absolutely no need for your students to watch you finding a file or typing something, or waiting for a website to load. Simply cut it out of your video after you're finished recording, during the post-edit. Dead air at the beginning and the end of a video lecture is a waste of time and can appear unprofessional. Get going and get to the point.

9. Think longevity

When you make a great video lecture, you will want to use it for many years to come! So do **NOT** state the name of the course of the year/term that the video was made. All you need is a title, your name and an image of you or the theme of the lecture. This way, you

can use the video for other students studying on other programs or at other universities. Great if you change your place of work in the future too.

10. Sometimes … ask a question or two in your video lecture.
How can you ensure that your students have actually viewed your video lecture? If you have spent some time making it, then you want to utilise it as best as you can. So, ask a question in the video (maybe two or more). Then students must respond to the question in s specific forum or as an assignment in your LMS (learning management system).

<u>And here are four more important things to consider!</u>

11. Record with standard dimensions
For the most part, record in 1280 x 720 (720p). That way, when you upload it onto a streaming site, you will not get black bars around the edges

12. Scroll smoothly and limit mouse movements
Watching someone scrolling up and down websites quickly and haphazardly is disorienting. So too are excessive mouse movements.

13. Wet your throat
Have a glass of water nearby, and make sure you drink every now and again.

14. Practice at least once before recording
Few people succeed at the first attempt. Go through your talking points and speak it through, and speak it out aloud!