



Instructional Video Best Practices

Recording video for your class is a great idea no matter what modality you are using to teach. Recently, more research has been coming out regarding how students best engage with media content and the conclusion was students do not engage with online material in the same manner as students do in a face-to-face class. Since our goal at Academic Outreach and Innovation (AOI) is to develop the highest quality material that we can for the variety of students we serve, we've streamlined some of that research into this document, combined it with our video production expertise, and mixed it with some time-saving information to create these best practices for instructional videos.

First Slide

The first slide or image of your video needs to include the following information:

- The course name and number
- The name of the presentation
- The name of the presenter (this could be the current instructor or previous instructor)

General Guidelines

Changing Information

- Minimize including information that could change.
- We recommend that you do not title presentations “week 1” or note things like “in chapter 2 of the text,” since this information frequently changes and that means your media will need constant updating.
- We also recommend that you not put website addresses in your media presentations. It is easier to put this information in the course space as text that you can easily edit as the information changes.

Copyright Liability

- Be aware of your copyright liability when using images and videos. Unfortunately, we are not able to use just any image or video in our presentations.
- Although many uses are covered under the TEACH Act and Fair Use clauses of copyright law, not everything is allowed.
- Instructors are responsible for following copyright law when they create media for their courses.

Background Noise

Try to minimize background noise when recording audio. Sit quietly and listen to the ambient noise in the area before you record. Ask yourself – is any of the natural noise in this area going to be distracting? If the answer is “yes” or “maybe” then rethink the time or place where you plan to record. Here are things to consider:

- Are you sitting next to a fan or air conditioner?
- Is someone cutting the grass outside your window?
- Is a television or radio on in the background?

Audio Transcripts

- Post transcripts of your audio narration near your presentation in Blackboard
- Creating multiple ways for your students to access information is a key component of good course design and helps maintain ADA compliance in your course



Title Cards

- Make sure any title cards have text that is optimized for easy reading.
- It is harder to read type when it is on backgrounds that are busy or when the type is a similar color to the background.
- To ensure that your students can easily read your text make sure to use type colors that contrast the background.
- High contrast means black text on a white background. Avoid low contrast situations like when you have light gray text on a white background.

Break it down

Break down larger concepts into multiple short presentations instead of creating one longer piece. Studies have shown that students tend to stop watching videos around the 6 minute mark in online classes. In classes with videos that were just 3 minutes in length about 75% of the students watched the videos all the way to the end.

Intermediate Guidelines

If you are feeling confident in your media production skills consider incorporating some of these intermediate-level guidelines into your video production.

Live Writing/Drawing

- Drawing or writing out key information “live” is more effective at engaging students than PowerPoint presentations.
- Khan Academy-style “live” tablet demos/drawings are more effective at engaging students in an online class than animated PowerPoints.
- There are lots of options to accomplish this “live” look as well, just contact us if you want to brainstorm ideas, borrow production equipment, or need support.

Record Yourself

- Record yourself talking straight to the camera in a tighter shot.
- Students tend to stop watching videos earlier when the instructor is lecturing at a board or farther away from the camera because they feel far away from you and the information.
- We recommend that you record yourself instructing straight to the camera like Math 100 instructor Candace Chappelle.

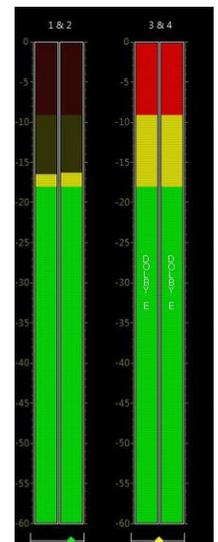


Lighting

- Look around at the light before you start filming. Make sure that you are well lit so students can clearly see your face.
- One tip is to face an exterior window so the natural light of the outdoors falls on your face. Then place your recording device between you and the window (just be sure not to block all the light coming in).

Audio Levels

- To understand the concepts you are covering, students have got to be able to hear you.
- We have an excellent team here at AOI but there is only so much we can do with bad audio and video. When recording check your audio levels – they should bounce gently between the green area of your audio monitor and the yellow.
- Just like a stoplight – red means “stop!” you are too loud (far right example).





Media

Export your media in an optimized format for our server. When we are done editing a video we use the following specs to optimize your media for streaming. If you know how to adjust these elements and are able to send media already encoded with these specs, please do so. However, if you don't know about these settings, no worries! Send the file to us in MP4 format and we'll take it from there!

- Codec: h.264
- Image size: 640x360
- Bit Rate: .5 – 1 Mbps
- Frames per second: 29.97

Informational Presentation Options

There are several programs that AOI supports that will turn your presentations into videos and interactive lectures. Some of them include:

- **Panopto** – The new lecture-capture system has diverse options for recording presentations including a multi- input/multi-camera option and easy indexing of audio and visual elements. You can also create Blackboard quizzes and embed them straight into a presentation in Panopto. More information about Panopto is available here: <http://www.panopto.com/>
- **Voicethread** – This interactive tool allows you to create presentations using PPTs (or other media) as a base. Students and viewers can then respond and ask questions by adding layers over the presentation. It is a great tool for encouraging interaction in an online environment. Check out our presentation on creating Voicethreads here: <http://voicethread.com/myvoice/#thread/6657194/34731233>
- **Office Mix** – This Microsoft plug-in will allow presenters easy options to create videos using PowerPoint as a base. They can easily record video, audio, draw on their slides, insert pre-made videos, and insert quizzes (these do not report to Blackboard, but are more so students can check their understanding) into a presentation. Check out and download Office Mix here: <https://mix.office.com/>
- **Articulate Presenter** – This program allows AOI to merge audio narration with PowerPoint slides. You can see an example of the final product on the Learning Innovations showcase page: <https://li.wsu.edu/services-and-showcase/showcase/>
- **Zoom** - Zoom is used to conference with people using video and audio over the internet, but can also be a great tool to use if you want to record the screen and/or yourself at the same time. Check out more information about Zoom here: <https://www.zoom.us/>

Depending on the information you are presenting, one tool might work better than another.

If you need assistance or more information about creating media for your course, please contact [AOI](#) at 509.335.3557.