

Recording Lectures for Online Viewing

Recorded lectures, including videos and narrated PowerPoints, can be an effective way to present online course content. They provide a means for you to elaborate on assigned readings, draw attention to key ideas, and explain complex concepts. Last, but certainly not least, they add immediacy and presence by enabling you to speak to your online students in your own voice.

The following guidelines may help you prepare and develop recorded lectures for your online course:

1. Before you begin, **write a script**. Script-writing takes time, but it will help you organize and edit your thoughts before you begin recording. Once the recording has been produced, the scripts can be used as transcripts and note-taking handouts for the students.
2. Keep narrated lectures short, about **10 minutes maximum**. If your material requires a longer presentation, break it up into chunks. Human attention span is not optimal for longer presentations.
3. **Chunk presentations** by specific and narrow topics. For example, instead of creating a 30-minute lecture on motivation, consider two separate presentations - one on intrinsic motivation and one on extrinsic motivation.
4. Lectures should be professional, but still **relatable and personable**. Use conversational language and frequent examples, plus incorporate elements of your personality into your lecture.
5. When selecting images for your slides, make sure that they complement your words rather than compete for the viewer's attention. Use **quality images** with appropriate resolution and sizing.
6. **Comply with copyright** guidelines when you include images. If you want to use a copyrighted image, seek permission first.
7. Assess quality with a short **test recording**. Record the first few slides as a quick test before you record an entire lecture. Is the audio clear and loud enough?
8. Learn to recognize issues that limit usability for diverse learners. For example, jumpy transitions and low contrast text and background colors may create viewing difficulties for learners with visual problems. Certain colors may be unperceivable by individuals who are color-blind. To learn more about **designing for diversity**, consult the [Instructional Accessibility @ Pitt](http://teaching.pitt.edu/accessibility/) pages (teaching.pitt.edu/accessibility).
9. When you record your narration, choose a **quiet room** with the door closed and the phone turned off. You may also want to log out of your email to prevent notification beeps from interfering with your recording. Using a headset with a microphone produces the clearest audio.
10. You can **maximize the shelf life** of your presentation by avoiding mention of items that might not be current a year or two from now. For example, eliminate phrases like "last week's video assignment" or "this week's football game." Be aware that website addresses may become out of date. If you wish to refer to websites, include those links in an accompanying document.