

Planning and Recording Engaging Video Microlectures

Microlectures are short, instructor-produced videos of a single key concept or specific skill set designed to help focus and maintain student attention, provide content students can easily fit into their busy lives, and allow them to reengage with the content as needed (Scagnoli, 2012).

In addition, research shows that microlectures featuring the instructor talking into the camera are an effective way to create a sense of instructor presence and help online students feel more connected to you and more motivated to learn (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Nilson & Goodson, 2018; Scagnoli, 2012).

Below is a set of guidelines for preparing and recording your own microlectures.

Preparing Your Microlecture

- **Determine the learning objective.** As you consider the topic for your microlecture, be sure to define specifically what your students should be able to do or understand after watching the video. Also, make sure that your topic aligns with the course's learning objectives.
- **Write a script.** Writing out a script for your microlecture helps to refine your comments and make sure that your content is clear and concise. You do not have to read every word of the script when you record the video, but writing it out will help you stay on track. You can also determine the video's approximate length using the total word count and tools such as Edge Studio's time calculator. If your script is longer than 10 to 15 minutes, consider dividing it into two or three shorter videos. Below are the recommended time allotments for each part of a microlecture.
 - In the first 30 seconds, provide an overview of what students can expect to learn.
 - For the next five to six minutes, present material.
 - In the last 30 seconds, summarize the learning objective or key points, and provide students with a question to ponder or set of questions to answer.
- **Determine the presentation style.** Microlectures can range from a simple talking-head video that you record on your phone or computer to a more elaborate video that includes visuals and animation. In addition, the PowerPoint program includes clear instructions to record your voice as you narrate slides. Other video software, such as Panopto, allows you to record yourself and your PowerPoint presentation side by side. The presentation style you choose for your microlecture should be guided by the content you want to convey.

Recommendations for Recording Your Video

Don't try to be perfect. Because the video should mimic what you would say during a face-to-face session, do not worry if you stumble over your words or need to correct yourself. In fact, imperfections make the video more authentic and let students know that there is an actual person behind the screen. At the same time, try not to ramble; stick to your script or outline.

Tone. Maintain an upbeat tone of voice throughout the video. When you enjoy what you are talking about, students remain engaged and get excited with you! Even if you describe something technical, such as how to navigate the online course, avoid sounding like you are tired or reading from a script. It also helps to smile while talking because smiling is conveyed via audio, regardless of whether or not students can see you.

Pace. Discuss concepts in small, manageable chunks to ensure that you do not address too much content in too short an amount of time. Incorporate meaningful pauses for dramatic effect. To help maintain engagement, ask questions and encourage students to pause the video to ponder their responses.

Avoid poor quality. Poor sound and visual quality can be distracting for viewers. At a minimum, choose a quiet place (without background noise) with good lighting to make your video. If you plan to create more than one video, consider investing in a good microphone for better sound quality.

Caption or transcript. Your written script can be used as a transcript, to create subtitles, or for closed-captioning of your video. Contact your educational technology department or disability office for more information on how to create transcripts and closed-captioned video.

Recommendations for Using PowerPoint

Map Out the microlecture. Map out each part of your lecture by creating a slide with a title that indicates the main point you want to make on that slide. Remember to cover only one main topic per microlecture.

Choose visuals. Pictures and other visual images are an impactful way to communicate ideas. You can find free images online at sites such as Flickr Creative Commons (<https://www.flickr.com/creativecommons>) and Free Images (<http://www.freeimages.com>).

Create text. Visuals can also be accompanied by explanatory text on the slide. The text should be short but descriptive enough to emphasize the point. Be sure to provide definitions of any new key words or terms that you want students to remember.

Design for accessibility. Check with your educational technology department and/or the disability office to ensure that your videos are accessible to everyone. For a complete list of best practices for designing your PowerPoints for accessibility, visit <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us>.

Sources

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