

Create a Video to Explain Complex Content

Explanatory videos are helpful to students in face-to-face, hybrid, and online classes, because students can engage with the video at their own pace and reengage as needed. Below are guidelines for creating videos that will help students understand complex content.

Scaffold and chunk information. Be sure to scaffold from simpler to more complex content. It may be helpful to present simple content first and then more complex ideas separately in sequenced microlectures.

Provide organizational cues when explaining difficult concepts.

- Forecast: “Today’s lesson will cover . . .”
- Highlight key points: “Write this down.”
- Signal transitions to a different focus: “Now that we’ve covered X, let’s discuss Y.”
- Repeat main points or difficult information: “Just to review what we’ve covered so far.”

Slow down. Speak at a slower pace when the information is complex.

Draw attention to new terms. If using PowerPoint, highlight new words and provide a written definition, followed by an oral explanation with examples. If there is a significant amount of new terminology, provide students with a list of words or terms, definitions, and examples of usage.

Integrate explanatory visuals. Include diagrams, videos, and pictures. These are very helpful if you need students to process complex relationships and ideas.

Check for understanding. At appropriate stopping points or after each microlecture, have students complete a short practice quiz to make sure they grasp the key points. The practice quiz can be developed so that it provides feedback about why answers are either correct or incorrect.

Provide a Q & A forum. Encourage students to ask questions and remind them that any question they ask is likely helping other students who have the same or similar questions.

Solicit and respond to feedback. To assess if your presentation of the complex concept was effective, ask students to fill out a reaction survey.