Recording Video & Module Overviews for Your Online Course

IMPORTANT: After reviewing the material in this document, **record & send your instructional designer a 10-second test video** for review before recording the actual course videos.

How to Prepare for and Think about Your Video Shoot:

Prepare! In advance of the shoot, make a brief list of bullet points you want to cover in each video. (You may want to visit your syllabus and the Canvas module **Welcome pages** to prepare.)

Keep it light and conversational. Humor is a-okay. Do <u>NOT</u> to read from a script. You are 'warming up' the participants to the content and the course. You are relationship building.

Speak to the camera. Tell the participants what you hope they will get out of the course or module: *How should they approach the content? What should they keep in mind? Any assignments they should prepare for? Why are you excited by this topic? This course?*

<u>Note</u>: We will not 'edit' these videos.

Course vs. Module Overview Videos

Course Overview Videos: (60-90 seconds long)

The key here is to **welcome participants to the course**. Remember, you are <u>not</u> talking to a classroom of students, you are talking to *an individual participant,* likely in their home or office, perhaps at the end of a long day. We want to express warmth and really try to connect with the student through video.

What can they expect from the course? What do you expect of them? You will also want to call out any key activities or assignments in the module that may require emphasis, so participants can plan early on to complete their work.

<u>Course overview videos might begin with</u>…

- *"Welcome to the course! I'm happy to have you here. My name is, and I'll be your instructor for this course (title here)."*

- *"I wanted to take a moment an give you a brief overview of what you can expect from this course, and from me..."*

- *"This course is about XYZ... it is <u>NOT</u> about..."*

Module Overview Videos: (30-60 seconds long each)

The key is to tell participants **what topics will be explored in that particular module**, what you expect from them, to put them in the right frame of mind, as well as call out any key activities or assignments in the module that may require emphasis, participant planning, or further explanation.

This is an opportunity to keep participants motivated! Module overview videos are a great chance to connect with participants in the online space, other than discussion forums and office hours, so keep the connection alive.

You can also use it to transition from the previous module content to the next, if you are confident that the order of your course modules will likely stay the same.

<u>Module overview videos might begin with</u>…

- *What I want you to think about in this module is..."*

- *"In this module, we will investigate..."*

- *"This week, I want you to think about..."*

- *"What I'm looking for here is..."*

- *"What are the issues? What do you think?"*

- *"Remember, by the end of the week you must turn in... so prepare in advance!"*

- *"This is where it gets really interesting…"*

- *"In the last module, we discussed ABC, now we'll use that information to PDQ..."*

How to Shoot a Decent Video Using a Webcam or Laptop

Most instructors use their **webcam** to record their videos. Just be sure you are well lit from the front, and that your audio can be heard. If you sit too far from your webcam, the audio may be low.

You may record your video with another device, and that's fine. These are the most common acceptable video file formats, if your video is one of these types... we're good!

- mov – Apple Quicktime
- mpg – Digital Video Format
- mpeg – Digital Video Format
- wav – Digital Video Format
- wmv – Windows Media
- mp4 – Digital Video Format
- H.264 (best for Vimeo)

SET THE STAGE:

Each instructor should record his/her video in an attractive, comfortable, and professional setting. Make sure the background is tidy, perhaps with a plant or nice work of art. Can you tell what is behind you in the background? Is it pleasing? Uncluttered?

FRAME THE SHOT:

- Closer is better. We are trying to establish intimacy, a connection between you and the participant who is watching. They want to get a sense of you, your expectations, and your personality.

- Position yourself in front of the webcam so that your head and shoulders are visible.

- Avoid having too much "dead space" above your head.

- <u>Your eyes should be at the approximate height of the camera</u>, to avoid a "double chin" effect or "looking up" at your viewer. Use a tripod, or place a box/books under your camera to get the right height if need be.

LIGHTING:

- Make sure you are in a room with plenty of light.

- When you're sitting in front of your webcam, the main source of light should face you so that it illuminates your face.

- A desk lamp aimed at one's face makes a BIG difference.

- Avoid bright lights behind your head (such as a window) otherwise you will be in shadow.

GET GOOD SOUND:

- Built-in microphones on webcams or laptops do not provide the best audio quality, so you want to try and minimize any background noise they may pick up. Sit close to the camera, or use a lavalier mic if you have one.

- Film indoors in a quiet room. If possible, turn off any equipment that creates noise (air conditioners, fans).

- Speak clearly and articulate your words.

ACTION!

- Look into the camera, not your laptop screen.

- Move a bit... this is video! Emphasize key points with your voice, with expression, and by using one's hands helps to make the video come alive.

- Most importantly, smile. :)

Below is an example of a poorly executed webcam setup:

With a few simple changes, we can easily make this a lot better:

- Turn off the light behind him. Turn on the room lights and position a lamp in front of him so that the light is directed at his face.

- Remove his glasses. (There is reflected glare from his computer – unless you are in a really bright room this is tricky to eliminate, so removing his glasses is the best option.)

- Reduce background clutter by erasing the whiteboard.

- Re-position the camera so that his head is in the upper half of the screen.

Voila!