Plan and Record Engaging Microlectures

Microlectures are short, instructor-produced videos that are designed to provide effective explanations of a single key concept or specific skill set. The format helps focus and maintain student attention, provides students with content they can easily fit into their busy lives, and allows students to reengage with the content when and if needed (Scagnoli, 2012).

In addition, the instructor speaking directly into the camera in a microlecture can be an effective way to help create a sense of instructor presence and help online students feel more connected to the instructor (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 students should know or be able to do after watching the video.
- *Write a script.* Writing a script for your microlecture helps to refine your comments and ensure that the content is clear and concise. You do not have to read every word when recording 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 are expected to learn.
    - For the next 5 to 6 minutes, present new material.
    - In the last 30 seconds, summarize the learning objective or key points and provide students with a question 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 animations. The PowerPoint program includes instructions for recording 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.* Since 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. Remember to avoid rambling; stick to your script or outline.
- *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 are describing something technical, like how to navigate the online course, avoid sounding like you are tired or reading from a script. It also helps to smile while talking, since smiling is conveyed via audio, regardless of whether or not students can see you.
- *Discuss concepts in small, manageable chunks to ensure you do not cover 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.

References

Boettcher, J. V., & Conrad, R.-M. (2016). *The online teaching survival guide: Simple and practical pedagogical tips* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Nilson, L. B., & Goodson, L. A. (2018). *Online teaching at its best: Merging instructional design with teaching and learning research*. Jossey-Bass.

Scagnoli, N. (2012, November 1). 7 things you should know about microlectures. *Educause Learning Initiative*. https://library.educause.edu/resources/2012/11/7-things-you-should-know-about-microlectures