

Producing Your Own Videos

1. A good introduction

Always add a good introduction to your videos that briefly explains what you are going to cover and why. It's also a good idea to list what you are going to cover, and refer to this list as you proceed, so that students know where they are and what they are going to see next.

2. Diversify: offer a range of videos

Rather than producing just lecture videos, explore other types of videos that may be useful for your students. For example, you could work through selected tutorial questions, or you could select a particular topic or example for analysis and discussion, and really explore this, highlight key areas / issues, answer "what if's", and so on. When students email questions, rather than writing a multi-page response, it may be more efficient and effective to reply with a video. Videos can also be a great way to provide feedback on assessment.

3. Invest time learning the tools

Learning your video recording / production tools properly will help you with all stages of production from recording through editing and post-production to generating the final video. Becoming familiar with your video software will save you a lot of time in the long run and will enable you to produce a more polished result that is likely to be a better experience for your students.

4. Limit the recording area

If you record the entire screen, the recording software is going to create massive work files. If you do your presentation in a sub-section of the screen, the work files will be much smaller and more manageable. Also, by limiting the recording area, you can use other parts of the screen for memory joggers, a list of things you want to cover, sample questions to ask, and so on.

5. Don't be afraid to do another take

You can always edit out mistakes or re-takes in post production. However, if you start off on the wrong foot, this can put you off track for the entire video. If you make a bad start, it might be better to stop, take a short break to catch your breath and re-focus, and then start again.

6. Avoid distractions

Prior to recording your videos, close Outlook and any other software that make sounds (e.g. when emails arrive), because these may distract you or they may distract or confuse viewers of the video. Try and ensure the visible area behind you is tidy, because this can also be distracting.

7. Maximise reusability / minimise maintenance

If you produce long videos and they need updating because the material, slides, order, etc has changed, then this can be a lot of work. A better way to work may be to produce a short video for each topic, and either distribute these to students, or else combine and package them up in the order you want and provide this combined video to students.

8. Do a test run before starting

Make sure everything is working as expected, sound levels are right, camera is working properly, etc by doing a quick test run before recording your actual presentation.

9. Be there during your presentation: remember your students

Videos should be as useful and engaging as possible for students. Don't just read the slides. It is what you add to the presentation that will really bring it to life: your experiences, your advice, correlating presented information with what is happening in industry, and adding background information to explain why things are the way they are. Set aside a quiet time so you can focus and take your time.

10. Keep backups

Keep backups of all of your work, including your video project and work files, because you may want to change part of a video or re-use the files again in other projects in the future.