Best Practices for Producing Instructional Videos

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This compilation of best practices was created to assist you in the production of effective instructional videos. You will learn:

• Best practices for pre-production and script writing
• Best practices for workspace organization
• Best practices for technical production and preparation
• Production processes to consider
• Production processes to avoid
• Instructor’s Introduction
Pre-Production: If you are recording in front of a projector, it is not recommended that you stand directly in front of the projector screen while placing the camera in front of the screen as well.

Script Writing: Prior to recording your digital media content, it is important to write a concise script that clearly conveys the message that you are planning to share with your students.

**NOTE:** For an optimal recording experience, it is recommended that you initially prepare by verbally reading your entire script thoroughly, in repetition to verify that your words flow smoothly with no informational discrepancies. Separately, this script should be uploaded to D2L as a text-based support document for your visual content.
Workspace Organization

**Workspace:** Verify that your workspace is clean and organized. **NOTE:** Any additional items that remain on the desk might distract the viewer, so make sure that you remove those items.
Background: It is important to ensure that the space behind you is clean, organized, and not cluttered with large amounts of items. Please remove all items that may possibly distract the viewer.

NOTE: If there are too many items in your background, the effectiveness of your message/content can be diminished. The viewer’s attention may be focused upon the items in your background instead of the information that you are conveying.
Instructor Positioning: To create a visually interesting shot that guides the viewer’s eyes toward you (the subject), it is best not to position yourself in the center of the screen.

**NOTE:** For the best results, it is recommended that you position yourself near the “left” or “right” side of the screen. This concept also applies if you are using visual aids. The result is a balanced shot.
Make Eye Contact: Be sure to look directly at the camera as much as possible given that the student’s point of view and the camera’s point view are the same.

NOTE: The student/viewer will be able to connect more readily with you as the instructor/presenter if proper eye contact is established.
Production Processes to Consider

**Using Lamps:** If you are recording in a room that is slightly dim, it’s recommended that you use lamps to light your background and the front of your face, torso, etc.

**NOTE:** The purpose is to verify that your face, torso, workspace, and background are completely visible.

**Natural Lighting (Sunlight):** If you are recording in a room that has a substantial amount of natural light, position yourself into a space in which the main light source is located behind your camera, but shining on your face.

**NOTE:** This position will provide you with a great light source for your video, but test your recordings to verify that your image is not too bright for your video.
Bright Windows: It is not recommended to record with your back facing a bright window. This will cause your camera to attempt to balance the amount of lights and darks in the room (White Balance).

**Result:** You will appear as a dark shadow or silhouette.
Recording In Front of a Projector: If you are recording in front of a projector, it is not recommended that you stand directly in front of the projector screen while placing the camera in front of the screen as well.

**Result:** You will receive many unwanted shadows. Your projected information will be difficult to read, it would be difficult to see you, and the viewer would be completely distracted.

Audio: To record optimal audio for your video, it is recommended that you use your computer’s built-in microphone or an external microphone.

**NOTE:** For optimal quality with minimal to no distortion, it is best to record in a quiet room where no music or other distinct sounds are present.

Video: Verify that your webcam or video camera is focused properly and operating correctly.
Instructor’s Introduction

**Introduction:** Introduce yourself (First and last name, course title and course number), discuss the highlights of the course and outline any pertinent aspects that students should expect.