

# Creating Engaging Videos

## Consider Your Purpose and Audience

Before you begin creating your video, carefully consider your audience and purpose. Ask yourself:

- Who are my audiences? In other words, who's going to be watching this video?
- What does your audience already know about this topic? What knowledge do they already bring to the table? If, for instance, your students have already read a chapter on the topic, then you might not need to present on the chapter as a whole, so you can instead focus on a particularly thorny concept or complicated process.
- How will your audience use this information? Is it to master concepts? To review for an assessment?
- How can your video help your audience better understand the topic? Again, focusing narrowly on complex material may be more beneficial than taking a broader scope. Instead of reviewing an entire chapter on cellular reproduction, for instance, you might give an in-depth overview of mitosis or meiosis.
- How will the audience benefit from **your** perspective? If you're simply relaying information that is readily available elsewhere, then you might consider looking for an open educational resource (or OER) video that explains the topic. There are many high quality OER videos available in a variety of subjects, and in many cases, they have been created by professionals. By incorporating OER video resources into your course, you can devote your time to working on other areas of the course.

## Create a Transcript

After you've determined your purpose and audience, the next step is to write a transcript. Although you might prefer to speak "off the cuff" in your face-to-face courses, using a transcript makes the recording and editing process much easier and quicker.

A transcript not only keeps you on track, but it can also extend the life of your videos. When you're freestyling your presentations, you might say something like, "In my last video," or "like we talked about last week." When you're teaching a face-to-face course, these sorts of comments are perfect because they draw connections between what you're doing now and what you've done in the past. You can do the same thing with an online class, of course, but it's better not to do that in your videos, just in case you shift content around in the future and suddenly you find that your videos are obsolete.

Transcripts also simplify the captioning process. In fact, if you're using YouTube to publish your videos, you can just copy your transcript and paste it into their caption editor, and YouTube will automatically sync your captions and your slides.

As you're writing your transcript, be sure to read it aloud. You want to sound conversational, not overly stiff and formal. During the recording process, speak naturally. Ideally, your audience wouldn't be able to tell that you were working from a transcript.

## Create Compelling Slides

Another important step to creating dynamic and engaging presentations is to create compelling PowerPoint (or Google Slide) presentations before you begin recording, and do so with the viewer in mind. Part of this includes limiting the amount of text that appears on each slide. To keep your videos engaging, avoid reading text directly from your slides.

You'll also want to make sure that you're using large images, especially for charts and graphs. Make the image as large as possible, and then explain the significance of it in your narration. Large images are useful for everyone, but especially for people who might be watching your video on a small screen, like a tablet or mobile phone.

You should also try to limit your use of flashy animations and transitions. You want the content to shine through here, not your PowerPoint wizardry, which can be distracting for viewers.

## Setting Up Your Recording Area

You should set up your recording area before you begin recording. This might include finding a quiet area to record. Microphones are sensitive, so you might want to send the kids next door, give the dog a treat, and make sure your neighbor isn't cutting her grass.

If you have one on hand, use a high quality microphone. Clean sound quality is just as important as clean visuals.

If you're using Camtasia's picture-in-picture feature to record yourself alongside your slides, you might also want to adjust the lighting so that you can be seen clearly. Position your camera so that it's recording you from above rather than below.