My Mediasite Best Practices

As you prepare presentations to record in My Mediasite, consider these best practices to help you create effective, engaging presentations.

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Preparing your Presentation

Before recording your presentation, you should think about where it belongs in your lesson, what you want to say and what visuals will enhance the presentation’s content. These considerations will help inform the type of presentation you choose. This section provides some information to consider as you prepare your presentation and recording (And of course, be sure to practice before you record!).
Thinking About Your Video and Presentation

The following components are important to consider when planning a lesson. You may decide to include only certain components in the actual video (e.g., the introduction and content presentation), and include the rest in Moodle. Dividing content this way allows you to leverage the tools available in Moodle, such as the online test feature and assignment tool. However you choose to deliver content, consider these key elements as you plan a lesson:

- **Introduction**: What is the focus of the lesson? How would you introduce this lesson in a face-to-face environment? How would you engage the students? For instance, you might begin with an example, a thought-provoking question or a discussion of how this content relates to their daily lives.
- **Learning Outcomes**: What are the intended learning outcomes after the student has completed this lesson? How will you evaluate whether a student has achieved these outcomes?
- **Readings**: What readings are relevant to the lesson? How and when should students encounter these materials?
- **Content Presentation**: What media are most suited for delivering and presenting the content of the lesson? Should you use a video, multiple videos or a combination of different media? For instance, you may provide a combination of direct textual instruction, a video, some additional instruction and a relevant link.
- **Assignments**: How do the assignments relate to the course goals, objectives and learning outcomes? Do you want to provide a short quiz, in addition to other assignments, to assess students’ understanding of the content material?
- **Wrapup**: How can you tie together the lesson’s content and activities to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- **Closure**: Where can the student go to obtain more information? For instance, you might provide external links and additional resources.

For more information about the components of a lesson, check out the Nine Instructional Events in Lecture Design.

Scripting Your Presentation

Before recording your video, it’s helpful to have a strong idea of what you want to say and how you want to say it. While a script isn’t required, planning what you want to say before you record your presentation will help your presentation run smoothly. Planning can help eliminate filler
words (such as “um,” and “uh”) and keep your presentation focused on the material you are presenting.

Consider these points as you script and prepare your presentation:

- **Flow**: Aim at making your script as conversational as possible. Even if you plan or script your presentation, you want to sound natural, not like you’re delivering a speech. Remember, too, that when recording a video you will not have the face-to-face feedback that guides you in the traditional classroom.
- **Outlines**: You may want to develop a basic outline to guide you as you record the video. This outline might take the form of bullet points or a concept map. Or, you may want to integrate your outline in the actual presentation as a visual roadmap to help students know where they are in the presentation process.
- **Length**: Divide longer lectures into three to twelve minute segments for recording. Doing so will make the material more accessible to students, and can help you prioritize and organize the topics for the students.
- **Reusability**: Since the videos you create can be reusable learning objects, your script should avoid mentioning “time-sensitive” information, such as the current term, and any due dates or assignments that may change from semester to semester.

Since you’re not presenting the material in a traditional classroom, you may want to take these additional steps to make your video more effective for students:

- **Gain Attention**: Do something to capture the students’ attention at the beginning of the video. You might consider using interesting images, telling a relevant story or providing some interesting facts.
- **Include Learning Outcomes**: If you include the learning outcomes for the video lesson at the beginning, students can engage the material and retain the information more effectively.
- **Highlight New Concepts**: Use visual and aural clues to highlight new concepts in the video. Allow time in the presentation for students to process the information.
- **Make Connections**: When introducing new material, reiterate how it relates to other concepts already covered in the course. This strategy works best in a course where the knowledge builds in a “standard” format, so if you frequently rearrange concepts and course materials, you may want to make specific connections in the materials supporting the video presentation.

**Using Visuals in Your Presentation**
Visuals are one of the most important components of your video presentation, so it’s important to consider how they’ll be used in the lesson. A few points to keep in mind:

- **Start strong:** Your first slide should be your title slide, which you can use to provide some preliminary information about the structure and scope of your presentation.
- **Minimize text on the slides:** A text-heavy slide will cause your audience to read the slide instead of listening to your narration. Visuals are better accompaniments to your narration.
- **Avoid reading from the slides:** Nothing is more boring than listening to someone read to you what you can read for yourself.
- **Use good slide design:** Use standard fonts, and use different font sizes for main points and secondary points. Limit the number, color and sizes of fonts in your presentation. Use proper capitalization and punctuation, and proofread your slides carefully. Limit or eliminate the use of slide animations and transitions.
- **Incorporate effective graphics:** Use instructionally effective graphics (e.g., charts, diagrams and images), and avoid decorative graphics that don’t add to your content.
- **Use branding when appropriate:** Make sure to incorporate any branding for your course or department, but try not to make the branding so specific that you can’t reuse the presentation in different semesters and years.
- **Determine your own best practices:** If your presentation will become part of a larger library, consider the standards you want to incorporate into each video for unity and consistency (e.g., consistent title slides and review sections).
- **Preview your presentation:** Record your narration for the entire presentation as if you were presenting it. Then, run your presentation, and sit back and listen. You’ll gain an entirely different perspective when you pretend to be the audience. Listening to your presentation enables you to pick up much more easily on awkward moments, unclear passages and boring spots in need of revision.
- **Provide students with a downloadable, printable version:** Use the “Print Handouts” option to create a PDF handout students can print and take notes on while listening to the presentation. You might even consider leaving some information blank on the printout to encourage note-taking.
- **Determine when and how many animations to add to the slides:** If you include animations in the slides, it’s important to consider when to add animations and how many animations to add. Include only the types of animations that will make an impact on viewers—not animations that could be distracting.
- **Use animations and visuals consistently:** For a visually consistent presentation, limit the number of different animations you apply.

For more information about presentation design tips, check out these resources:

- DELTA’s recorded seminar [Presentation Zen: How Not to be Boring While Presenting](http://www.presentationzen.com).  
Choosing your presentation type

My Mediasite offers three video capture options to choose from, depending on the purpose and content of your video. These options include:

- **Screencast plus Audio**: This option records the screen as video, along with audio input from a camera or microphone. It is the only recording option that displays the mouse cursor in the final output. The ondemand presentation displays a video window without a slide carousel in the Mediasite player. This capturing choice produces the largest file size.

- **Screencast plus Video**: This option records your desktop as video with slides extracted as well as an additional video input from a camera with audio from a microphone. This option is optimal for demonstrations as this recording option displays fluid mouse cursor movements in the final output. This capturing option choice produces one of the largest file sizes.

- **Slideshow plus Audio**: This option records the computer screens as slides, along with audio input from a camera or microphone. It is the same as an AudioOnly presentation in Mediasite. The ondemand presentation displays a computer image window with a slide carousel in the Mediasite player. This option is ideal for users who don’t have a camera or prefer not to be on camera. This capturing choice produces the smallest file size.

- **Slideshow plus Video**: This option records the computer desktop as slides, video from your camera, and audio from your camera and microphone. It is the traditional Mediasite recording option and presentation format. This capturing choice produces a file size larger than Slideshow plus Audio, but smaller than Screencast plus Audio.

Practicing Your Presentation

Before you record your video, be sure to practice your presentation! Time yourself to make sure you’re making the points you want to make in an appropriate timeframe. If your presentation is longer than 12 minutes, you may want to split it up into smaller sections.
Recording Your Presentation

As you prepare to record your presentation, you’ll want to consider things such as what to wear, where you record and what equipment you need to enhance the quality of your recording.

This section reviews some best practices for setting up and recording your presentation.

**Note:** A wired connection is more reliable than a wireless connection when recording and then automatically publishing presentations. If your wireless connection is lost during the upload, the presentation will fail to publish to the server. This process will take several minutes depending on the length of your presentation. When Uploading Finished notification is displayed and the file states "Uploaded" the file has completed. You can uncheck the setting "upload files while recording" and upload later when you are on a wired connection.

What to Wear

If you (or another subject) will be seen in the recording, please wear either light or dark-colored clothing (but avoid solid white, bright red and black clothes). Please avoid anything with a small, fine or tight pattern, such as plaids or stripes, and please leave any large or shiny jewelry in your jewelry box at home. These accessories can be visually distracting for viewers.

Where to Record

To enhance your desktop recordings, consider these best practice guidelines:

- **Video:** Position your webcam so that you (or any sitting subjects) are at eye-level. Make sure you’re centered in the video screen.
- **Sound:** Audio capture can be even more important than the video capture, since even the best video capture won’t matter if viewers can’t hear clearly what’s being said. Most webcams have built-in microphones suitable for audio recording. If the audio recorder is separate from the webcam, use a desktop microphone or a headset microphone. If you’re wearing a headset, be sure to adjust it so the microphone is about one inch from the corner of your mouth.
- **Lighting:** Proper lighting is essential for good video quality and even a simple desk lamp can be used as your main light source. Whatever lighting you use, make sure you’re illuminated. Turn on any available lights in the room, close all windows and minimize
glare from the computer monitor. Make sure the light behind you is not brighter than the light illuminating you. Never use your computer monitor as your light source!

- **Background**: Position yourself (or the subject) in front of a wall with neutral colors, and avoid angles that place patterns, wallpaper or mirrors in the background. You might also use a blank wall, if one is available, or hang a solid color sheet as a backdrop.
- **Other Considerations**: Keep your recording space quiet and comfortable. Clean up your recording area, as a tidy workspace conveys professionalism to your viewers. Turn off all appliances or devices that may create ambient noise, and eliminate all possible distractions and interruptions. Turn off your cell phone, and if you’re at home, let other people in the house know you’re recording a presentation.

### Recording Equipment

Using the right equipment when recording your video can enhance the quality of your presentation. Consider these guidelines when choosing your equipment:

- **Minimum Requirements**: For Screencast plus Audio and Slideshow plus Audio presentations, you will need either a built-in microphone or an external microphone. For Slideshow plus Video presentations, you will need both a microphone and a webcam.
- **Headsets with Microphone**: If your computer does not have a builtin microphone or if you’re recording in a location with significant background noise, you may want to use a headset with a microphone to eliminate ambient noise.

### Delivering Your Presentation

You don’t need to be a professional speaker or a seasoned movie star to record an effective presentation. Consider these suggestions when producing your video:

- **Be an engaging speaker**: Vary your intonations, use humor and a conversational tone, and remember to smile and be yourself! Your main goal should be to keep your listeners interested and focused. Pretend you are actually talking to a live audience. It may help to place a photograph of your family or a pet near the computer and pretend you’re talking to them.
- **Don’t worry about small mistakes**: If you feel that you jumbled a phrase, don’t restart the recording. You can always say, “Let me say that again,” and then restate your phrase just as you would in a traditional classroom.
• **Use strong voice inflection**: If you do not use a camera in your recordings, your students can't see your hand gestures or facial expressions. Use strong inflection or repeat the content to emphasize and draw attention to key points.

• **Avoid excessive verbal pauses, such as “um”**: Do a dry-run of the presentation, or practice reading the script several times to help eliminate distracting verbal pauses.

• **Check your sound quality**: Use an external microphone or headset to achieve a clear, consistent sound. Keep the microphone approximately 6 to 8 inches from your mouth to avoid picking up breathing sounds

### Describing Content in Moodle

If you plan to share your recordings in your Moodle courses, it is good practice to provide brief descriptions of each recording. Your students may be reviewing several lectures, and the description will help inform them of the recordings' content. Methods for including descriptions in Moodle vary depending on the types of tools you use. For example, the Label tool in Moodle allows you to include a short description of the recordings' content. For more information about other available resources and tools for describing content in Moodle, please visit [Moodle.org](https://Moodle.org).