

# At a Glance: Instructional Videos Best Practices and Tools

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The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

## Instructional Videos

Instructional videos can serve many purposes for instructors and students. In a face-to-face class, recording and posting lectures or additional instructional videos gives students more opportunities to interact with and learn the material. In an online class, instructional videos add a sense of instructor presence in what could otherwise be a very impersonal course. Pre-recorded min-lessons can also be a time saver as a remediation tool for students who need to review topics. As instructional videos have gained in popularity, a bevy of tools have become available to aid in the process. Read on to explore best practices and recommended tools.

## Best Practices

- Keep it short – 10 minutes or less is the optimal time for an instructional video. If your information requires a lengthier explanation, consider cutting the material into multiple videos to be watched by students with interspersed activities.
- Use a script or outline – Given the time constraints mentioned above, you want to stay on topic and spend your time on the important concepts. Scripting has the added advantage of making captioning easier and helping you avoid space filler words and sounds like “Um” and “So”.
- If filming with your device, turn it horizontally during filming.
- Find an editing tool that you can use to cut out mistakes so that you don’t have to start over every time you mess up. This will save you time in the long run.
- Caption your videos – for accessibility, videos need to be captioned. If a video is intended for your students at large, especially if you’ll be reusing that video later, you need have a captioning strategy.

## Ways to Use Instructional Videos

- Tutorial videos – “how to” or step-by-step videos. This might be a demonstration on the board or a screencast.
- Lecture – record a class lecture for students to review later as a refresher or for students who were absent.
- Mini-lesson – This could be additional material or a remedial lesson for struggling students
- Welcome video – personalize your introduction to online students by creating a welcome video.
- Feedback – videos can save you time by helping you streamline your feedback workflow

## Tools for Instructional Videos

### Equipment Resources

- The CELT office in Juneau (Egan 103) has the following hardware:
  - professional lighting
  - phone tripods
  - webcams
  - microphones
  - green screen for recording

### Recording Tools

- Devices – Use your phone or iPad to record
- Webcam – Most laptops have a built-in webcam that can be used to record

### Screencasting

- Zoom (you don't have to invite anyone else, just open a zoom meeting and hit record)
- [Screencast-o-Matic](#) (the free version allows 15 minutes per recording)
- [Apowersoft online screen recorder](#) (good tool for quick screencasts or gifs)

### Editing

- [Screencast-o-Matic free video editor website](#) (highly recommended)
- iMovie (for Mac users)
- Microsoft Video Editor (for Windows users)

### Other resources

- [CELT webpage on Videos](#)
- CELT video evaluating the above tools – [Video Creation and Editing Tools](#)
- CELT video on using YouTube to curate your videos – [Uploading Videos to YouTube](#)
- CELT video on captioning videos – [Video Captioning Tips and Tricks](#)