

# Best Practices for Online Lectures

Help students process, retain, and retrieve content from their working and long-term memory.

Online lectures (narrated PowerPoints, videos, recorded classroom lectures) can be effective Pre-Class Assignments (PCAs) if they follow guidelines below.

Adapted from Brame, C.J. (2015). *Effective educational videos*. Retrieved from <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/effective-educational-videos/>.



## Manage Cognitive Load

- Connect learning objectives, content, and relationships between concepts.
- Build content on prior knowledge.
- **Shorten - Segment - Weed Out** non-essential information.
- Break up content into logical pieces that target 1-2 concepts or topics each.
- Limit recorded lectures to <10 mins. each. Several short lectures are preferable to one lengthy lecture.
- Provide brief summaries or wrap ups that tie concepts together.



## Maximize Student Engagement

- Emphasize importance and application of content.
- Ensure content is updated and accurate.
- Use visuals and narration, instead of text, whenever appropriate.
- Grab attention with emotional content, such as patient testimonials.
- Direct student's attention with movement, annotations, arrows, shapes.
- Use novelty, such as a different activity or teaching method, to re-grab attention.



## Promote Active Learning

- Embed questions throughout lecture to help students process information.
- Provide quiz as self-check or assessment of learning and/or teaching.
- Promote higher-order learning through application, case-based questions, reflections.
- Connect lecture content to prior or upcoming classroom sessions.
- Use third party tools to add valuable interactive elements. Ex: decision-making, branching, quizzing w/scoring and feedback.



## Connect With Learners

- Use a friendly, conversational tone.
- Set expectations for viewing online lectures.
- Encourage students to send you questions or bring to class or office hours.
- Reference and clarify common challenges in content.



## Make It Easy To Use

- Note estimated completion time on each video to help students plan.
- Give students control navigating through lecture, speeding it up, pausing, replaying.
- Use descriptive titles and headers to help label and organize.
- Narrate content clearly, at a good pace. Provide captions/transcripts for accessibility, viewing in quiet environment, or language challenges.
- Confirm external links work and lecture files can be easily downloaded (if permitted).



## Use Multimedia Effectively

- If using existing videos, select those that align with learning objectives and best practices above.
- Ensure text and images are needed, legible, aligned, and don't obscure another object.
- Stay away from distracting objects, such as cluttered backgrounds, items that "fly in", sound effects, music, or decorative graphics.
- Sync text, bullets, or animation with narration.
- Confirm all objects run as designed on computers and browsers.