UAMS®

Best Practices for Narrating Online Resources

Your voice, both in the classroom and online, is a powerful teaching tool. Online learning resources, such as recorded lectures, interactive tutorials, and videos, can benefit greatly from narration.

Embrace Your Voice

- Students will get used to your voice, either in the classroom or online. Narration doesn't have to be perfect, just thoughtful, helpful, and effective.
- Take time and don't rush. Pause. Students know how to speed up playback.
- Be conversational, natural, and clear. Show your personality.
- Emotion grabs attention. Use your voice to emphasize, share enthusiasm, show concern, or humor.

Write a Script

- Few people can effectively "wing" narration recording. Write a script even if you don't follow it exactly.
- Read your script out loud. Shorten long sentences. Eliminate "mouthfuls."
- Don't overexplain or repeat content. Extremely detailed content might be better if broken into smaller chunks.
- Write transitions between concepts and slides.
- If recording a PowerPoint, write the script in the Notes section of each slide. You can then save the Notes as a transcript for your students to follow.

Follow Technical Basics

- Use a quality, external USB microphone to record narration, not the built-in recorder on a device. Good headsets are available for <$50.
- Check your microphone settings. Use the highest stereo quality and a good volume.
- Choose a quiet area for recording. A good headset will eliminate a lot of distracting background noise, unless it's really loud.
- Hydrate to reduce mouth noise.
- Avoid speaking directly into the microphone — position it at an angle, a small distance away from your mouth.
- To avoid variations in volume from one slide to another, record in one sitting.
- Separate long audio into shorter segments, so mistakes can be easily re-recorded
- Allow two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of an audio segment so you don't cut off narration. It's better to have too much and cut it back than to not have enough..

Practice

- Practice recording your content in the right environment with the correct equipment.
- Listen to your playback. Adjust the volume and the mic if needed.
- Break long sentences into shorter ones.
- Label your audio files logically. Save them where you can find them.

Make it Accessible

Provide transcripts because:

- Listeners have volume lowered
- Speaker and listener don't share same language, so accent or pace makes understanding difficult.
- Content is complex.
- Student is hearing-impaired
- It's a best practice and the law.