

Conceptualizing Online Lectures

Executive Summary

This planning guide aims to establish an approach to curricular media in an online course. Some steps, categories and approaches may not directly apply to every course, discipline, and/or teaching style. Over-arching principles are given to illuminate pathways in these grey areas.

Guideposts

1. Asynchronous media assets in an online course are not a 1:1 translation from a face-to-face lecture setting.
2. The unique qualities of media presentation should be leveraged (where possible) during this development process.
 - a. Can slow motion video or microscopic photography enhance the teaching of a concept?
 - b. How about juxtaposition in narrative/visuals?
 - c. Would appearing on location in video better convey a point?
 - d. Are guest experts easier captured in recording than as a visit to class?
 - e. How can animated graphics/images teach more effectively than stills?
3. No longer are you broadcasting a lecture to dozens, or hundreds, of students.
 - a. This is an intimate relationship across the medium.
 - b. Should be approached much more like office hours (or personal tutoring) than classroom lecture.
4. Mistakes can be edited, but authenticity of teaching carries much more weight than hyper-polished, lifeless presentation.
 - a. Keep it casual – some students may be learning in their pajamas!
5. Brevity and segmentation to a single concept improve retention.
 - a. A 50-minute lecture need not forcibly become five 10-minute lectures (or ten 5-minute lectures). Spend as much time on a concept as needed.
 - b. Those divisions will be much more natural to learning and allow for greater reuse of materials should they be relatively self-containing.
 - c. Media can be paused and replayed by students, so there is less need to build in repetition during lecture. These materials can be dense.

Start With the End in Mind

Lecture planning can fluctuate between the mundane repetition of previously curated materials or the exhausting creation of teaching methods and new associated teaching aids. Whatever your approach or time allowances, a crucial component to effective lecture delivery is a clear association between what is taught (the lecture) and stated goals (course objectives). Often this practice is referred to as Backwards Design: define the learning objectives > design assessments which prove mastery in desired learning objectives > design teaching materials to prepare students for correlating assessments. Before jumping in to recording lectures, checks against learning objectives and assessments will go a long way in assuring relevancy and retention in your recorded materials.

Asynchronous Lecture Planning

Describe your typical lecture presentation in the classroom. Responses here will help you take stock in normal lecture methods. Translating to recording should most leverage your tried and true teaching practices.

1. How and when did you prepare? (written outline, PowerPoint slides, research the night before to update example stats, “I know this like the back of my hand”, guest expert visits class, etc.)
2. What, if any, visual aids are you using? (a white board or document camera / tablet / projected slides / props/samples, student participation in demonstration, etc.)
3. How long are these lectures?
4. Do you typically take/ask questions from/of your students during lectures? How about breakout discussions?
5. How would you describe a lecture in the past that went really well?
6. If you’ve ever taught asynchronously online, describe those lecture materials. (powerpoint slides with audio narration, video, readings, etc.)

Translating to Online

Here are a few ways to describe the intent of your media. This will aid individual asset planning and also confirm resource allocation decisions.

1. Media in this course is intended for the following:
 - ☐ Lecture
 - ☐ Demonstration
 - ☐ Weekly/Module Overview
 - ☐ Lab / Case Study Introductions and/or Debriefs
 - ☐ Film-style scenarios, exercises, vignettes
2. In your discipline, what (if any) teaching elements are specifically visual? Put another way; If you were authoring a textbook on this material, would pure text suffice? (Any charts, graphs or figures needed? How about visualizations, physical samples, hand drawings, or body movement?)
3. What, if any, media examples are you familiar with from your colleagues or discipline area?
4. Are there areas of content better suited for a guest expert to deliver?

Pre-Production Practicals

“Wh” questions regarding content in your course. These items act as brainstorming tools and pre-recording checklists.

1. Who will appear / perform in media for the course?

- ☐ Instructor
- ☐ Guest expert(s)

If more than one guest, how many? _____

Are they affiliated with UIUC? _____ (departmental/campus approval may be required here depending on amount of contribution to course relative to UIUC Instructor contribution)

- ☐ Students
- ☐ General Public (i.e. On the street)
- ☐ Actors

2. What concepts will be covered in each produced material?
 - a. And how will you align materials to the brevity guidepost?
3. Which of the following will be lecture inputs:

- ☐ Original Powerpoint files
- ☐ Script
- ☐ Original video, audio, photographs
- ☐ Non-original video, audio, photographs from _____ (be sure to familiarize yourself with [copyright restrictions](#) in recorded, educational materials)
- ☐ Lecture outline / Bullet points
- ☐ Custom Software (SAS, Android App Developer, etc)
- ☐ Locations (building/room access, outdoor clearances, etc)

Hit Record, Edit and Publish

Now that you have things planned, how does one record and iterate?

- Recording and Editing tips found in our [Course-in-a-Box](#)
- Consult with us or Request assistance in developing portions of online course [here](#)
- For uploading and distributing media files to your students contact your department/college Online Ed. administrators for particular recommendations