Quick tips for video in a remote context

While long videos of you talking might seem more like your course before remote teaching, [long lecture video actually equals low learning](). Students become distracted, don't actively think about what they are learning, and over-estimate how much they have learned. Keep video short, and focus it on the three types most likely to help student success.

1. **Introduction videos:**

When your course met in person, the things you said before you started teaching new content or to help your students focus on what to do next really helped build rapport and trust. We often forget those parts in remote teaching, but they make great short videos. Common things that build relationship to you and the course include:

- **The course trailer**, where you introduce yourself, connect to students, and describe what the course is focused on and why it matters
- **A module overview**, that summarizes how an upcoming part of the course will be structured, including what students should do, and in what order
- **A transitional video**, where you highlight essential things to pay attention to as you conclude something and move onto something else

2. **Demonstration videos:**

When you want to learn how to do something, like build a new deck, you often turn to "how to videos" online. These demonstration videos are best when they are step by step explanations where something is demonstrated for you. Good demonstration videos focus on processes, use of tools/equipment, showcasing thinking about an artifact or specimen, or something in the field/on the land.

3. **Short lecture video:**

While a capture of a full lecture is not recommended as a main source of student learning, either in pre-recorded or live, [a short 3-8 minute video](), followed by student activity, is. Short instructional video is most helpful when it is focused on an essential idea that your students are often confused about if they just read about it. Each separate main idea or chunk is best as its own video.

Tips from USask media experts:

- Plug in your device and record in short clips
- Consider filming with your smart phone, as close up as possible. Use your headphones.
- Film in landscape mode (turn your phone horizontally).
- Pay attention to lighting and make sure you are not backlit (a light behind you that makes you a silhouette). Lighting should be even
- Don't film from below yourself. Eye level or slightly above will make a video much better.
- Do test recordings to make sure you are happy with the way it looks and sounds.
- Audio is a bit tricky if you're not using an external microphone, so record in a quiet room with lots of soft surfaces. This minimizes any echo.
- Put your phone in airplane mode to avoid notification noises.
- Brace your phone - keep it still.
- ***Avoid doing lecture capture on campus, unless you actually need access to specific equipment.***

- If you can, find and link to videos instead of making them yourself. Google and other search engines have specific video searches and streaming services like YouTube are common places to put educational videos
- Consider looking for video with a creative commons licence that allows you to adapt a video to make it right for you
- Find video in repositories, like the Canvas Commons, that connect directly to USask's LMS
- Not sure how to record using Panopto? Follow this step-by-step guide with demonstration videos
- Want more extended advice from the experts about good lecture video? Review the in-depth summary of lecture video best practice from the USask **Distance Education Unit**

Key details that will make your video more impactful and accessible

Keep the bandwidth low by picking the right technology

Recording audio directly in PowerPoint makes large files and file size/length can make it hard for some students to download or view video. Consider the use of Panopto to limit file size anytime you make a video of yourself speaking to your slides, and keep those videos short. Make videos downloadable to increase accessibility.

Use video as a part of an instructional sequence to engage your learners

Make a plan for your class that has many elements, not just you speaking to students or students reading by themselves. Activate prior knowledge, plan and integrate structured activities where learners engage, think, create and do, and create opportunities for connection and interaction. Video alone is not enough.

Ensure all learners can access your words

Even if the speaker is showing slides, lecture videos should contain lots of information that will be in the audio track but not in the slides. For students who struggle with auditory processing, those who might be deaf or hard of hearing, this can make your lecture video difficult or even impossible to follow. Use Panopto or YouTube to caption videos and describe images.

Ensure everyone can find videos that you have permissions to post

Put your video into your Blackboard or Canvas course within a module structure, so all students know where to find the video. If you are recording your classes, let students know in advance, and only put the recording in the LMS. You should not post this video outside the LMS or use it with another class without a release.

Be careful about Copyright

When you add graphics, music, or other important additions to a video, ensure you have permissions or the copyright/copy left rules allow your educational use. If your video needs to come down, you'll have done a lot of work for something your students can't access. Taping someone? Get a media release. Video faculty members shoot belongs to them, but you need permissions to share video that features others.