



From Classroom to Camera **A Guide for Lecturers**

DTU Media Lab
- a service from DTU Library

Last update: 5th of September 2024



CC BY

From Classroom to Camera

The 10 Commandments

As a university lecturer, you are no stranger to the act of imparting knowledge. However, presenting in front of a camera, as opposed to a live classroom, requires a nuanced approach to ensure your message is effectively conveyed through the lens.

In this document we have gathered the 10 commandments when creating educational videos, tips for preparation of your content and how to create a compelling storyboard.

1. Understanding the Medium

Firstly, it's essential to recognize the fundamental differences between a live lecture and a recorded session. In a classroom, you have the immediate feedback of your students' expressions and reactions, which guide your pace and energy. On camera, you lack this interaction, making it crucial to imagine your audience beyond the lens and maintain an engaging demeanor throughout.

2. Engagement Over Distance

In a lecture hall, your physical presence, your movements, gestures, and spatial relationship with your students plays a significant role in engagement. On camera, your tools for engagement are more concentrated: facial expressions, vocal inflection, and eye contact with the camera. Think of the camera as the student sitting right at the back of the class; you need to reach them with clarity and impact.

3. Color and Patterns on camera

Solid colors generally tend to translate better on camera than busy patterns, which can create a moiré effect (a wavy, glitchy pattern). Be mindful of bright colors that might wash you out, especially against a white background. And if your presentation will be recorded with a green screen, don't wear green.

Also, Keep jewelry minimal to avoid clinking or distracting noises. Busy accessories can also draw attention away from your message.

4. Clarity and Conciseness

While a classroom allows for digressions and extended discussions, on-camera work benefits from a tighter structure. Plan your content to be clear and concise. Scripting your lecture or having bullet points can help you stay on track and make editing smoother in post-production (See page 5).

5. Bridging the Abstract Gap

Scientific concepts and many teaching topics can be abstract and difficult to grasp. Concrete examples, like demonstrations or real-world applications, provide a relatable anchor point for viewers to connect with the abstract ideas and works very well on video.

6. Length

People typically speak around 150 words per minute during presentations. Consider this when crafting your educational video. Research suggests that viewers retain information best in videos around 6 minutes long, which translates to roughly 900 words. Instead of cramming everything into a single lengthy video, consider splitting your lecture into shorter, digestible chunks. ([Gou et al, 2014](#))

7. Create a Start, a Middle and an End

A clear structure with a beginning, middle, and end is crucial for educational videos because it enhances learning and keeps viewers engaged. Here's how it can create a roadmap:

Beginning (Introduction, learning objective and hook): A strong beginning grabs attention, introduces the topic, and sets the stage for learning. It tells viewers what they will gain by watching. Think of it as a map preview, showing the destination (learning objective) and the route (key points). Create a hook by for example stating a surprising fact, pose a thought provoking question or draw your viewers attention with a captivating story or anecdote that introduces the topic.

Middle (Instruction and Application): This is the heart of the video where the main content is presented. Here, the “meat” of the lesson unfolds, explaining concepts, demonstrating skills, or providing examples. Think of it as navigating the route, providing clear directions and landmarks (key points) along the way.

End (Summary and Conclusion): A strong ending summarizes the key takeaways, reinforces learning, and sometimes offers a call to action (further exploration, applying the knowledge). Think of it as reaching the destination and providing a final recap to solidify what viewers learned.

8. Engage the Eye

Think about how your content can incorporate visuals like animations, demonstrations, diagrams, or real-world footage to enhance understanding. A storyboard is your friend (see page 6).

9. Practice Makes Perfect

Just as you would prepare for a lecture, practice your on-camera presentation. Record yourself, review the footage, and adjust as needed. This practice will help you become comfortable with the medium and refine your on-screen persona.

Embrace this transition as an opportunity to expand your teaching repertoire and connect with your students in a new and exciting way. With preparation and practice, you can deliver compelling content that resonates with viewers, just as it does with your students in the classroom.

10. Know Your Audience

Tailor your content to the specific needs and knowledge level of the students in your course.

Teleprompter vs. Freeform Recording Method

When preparing for your video lecture, you have two primary methods to choose from: using a script or speaking freely (freeform) based on your slides and notes.

The choice between a script or freeform speaking depends on your comfort level, familiarity with the content, and desired presentation style. Consider your strengths and the nature of your content when deciding which method to use. Each approach has its benefits and challenges.

Using a **script**

Pros:

- **Consistency:** Delivers a consistent message, ensuring all key points are covered.
- **Clarity:** Reduces the likelihood of omitting important details or going off-topic.
- **Professionalism:** Provides a polished and professional presentation style.

Cons:

- **Rigidity:** May limit natural spontaneity and adaptability during the lecture.
- **Familiarity Required:** Necessitates thorough rehearsal to avoid a robotic delivery.

Speaking **Freely (Freeform)**

Pros:

- **Flexibility:** Allows for a more natural and spontaneous interaction with the content.
- **Adaptability:** Enables on-the-fly adjustments to the lecture.
- **Authenticity:** Often perceived as more genuine and engaging by the audience.

Cons:

- **Risk of Digression:** Greater risk of straying from the main points or becoming too detailed.
- **Inconsistency:** Potential for uneven coverage of content or forgetting key elements.
- **Timeuse:** The length of the video might turn out a lot longer than expected.

Visualize your lecture **Storyboarding**

Captivate your students and enhance learning outcomes with the power of storyboarding. By incorporating a clear narrative structure, visuals, and a focus on key elements, you'll be well on your way to developing dynamic and informative videos that resonate with your students.

Benefits of Storyboarding:

Enhanced Video Structure: A well-crafted storyboard acts as a blueprint for a structured and easy-to-follow educational video, promoting optimal learning outcomes.

Content Clarity and Impact:

Storyboarding empowers you to refine your video content for maximum clarity and impact, ensuring your message resonates with students.

Deepen Subject Matter Expertise: The process of constructing a storyboard strengthens your own understanding of the subject matter you're presenting, leading to a more confident and engaging delivery.

Crafting a Compelling Storyboard

Embrace the Narrative Arc: Structure your storyboard with a clear beginning (with a learning objective), middle, and end. This storytelling technique ensures a logical flow of information and fosters viewer engagement in your educational video, see more about the narrative arc in the 10 commandments.

Visuals Drive Understanding: Utilize visuals strategically to enhance the narrative and promote comprehension. Animations, demonstrations, and relevant close-up shots can effectively illustrate key points from your script.

Focus on Key Elements: While drawing yourself in the storyboard isn't essential, prioritize visually representing the core elements of your script. For instance, if your lecture involves a laboratory experiment, showcase the equipment and procedures visually instead of just your physical presence in the lab. Let the visuals become the focal point for conveying information.

How to Storyboard

- Sketc drawings or use sticky notes for each scene. Keep it simple and don't worry about artistic perfection; focus on clear communication of your ideas.
- Add photos, screenshots or whatever that can explain the scene.
- Write a brief description of what's happening in the scene, including narration, key points, or dialogue
- Incorporate visuals that complement your script and enhance understanding (diagrams, animations).
- Estimate the length of each scene to ensure your video stays within your desired timeframe.