TechSmith®

How to Effectively Shift to Online Teaching

The Ultimate Guide

Humanize Course Content, Leverage Asynchronous Learning, and Transform Your Online Teaching

The global COVID-19 pandemic has left universities and colleges scrambling to bring all courses online — with little preparation or time for instructors to make the transition.

And with the immediate and long-term future of higher education delivery uncertain at best, it's a safe bet that most if not all courses will require at least some online components.

As such, instructors who are new to the online learning environment may feel a lot of anxiety about how best to provide their students with the learning experience they deserve.

Are you stuck trying to build online courses for the first time?

Do you feel like you don't have the time to learn online learning best practices?

Do you struggle to connect with your students in this new, fully-online environment?

Do your online classes feel more transactional than conversational?

If you need to instruct, support, and teach students online, but struggle to do it in an authentic and personal way, then this guide is for you.

In this guide you will learn:

You can now turn your online classes into connected, active, and engaging learning communities.

It's easier than you think — and we'll show you how.

Imagine how your life could change if you ended every online course knowing:

- Your students could learn at their own pace.

- You built an active and inclusive online learning community.

- Your students felt connected to you and their classmates — and you feel connected to them.

- You created a humanized experience.

- Your students found the course enjoyable and satisfying.

- You were able to easily measure your content's effectiveness and student performance.

- You could use the same content semester after semester, year after year, as long as it's still relevant.

It's not a fantasy. By humanizing your content and leveraging the benefits of asynchronous learning, you can create courses that are as effective — or even more effective — as face-to-face learning.

And that's why we created this guide. By applying the recommendations, tips, tools, and techniques within, you'll understand best practices that enhance the online teaching and learning experience and be equipped to make it a success.

This guide offers resources, tools, and techniques that can be used by both individual instructors and institutions who wish to assist faculty make the transition to online teaching.

FOR INSTRUCTORS

Faculty will learn best practices for creating better online learning environments for students, as well as ways to incorporate video into online learning to humanize course content, leverage the advantages of asynchronous learning, and provide a more complete and successful educational experience for both students and instructors.

FOR INSTITUTIONS

Institutions or academic programs can provide these resources to faculty, online learning support staff, faculty development professionals, and online administration and support offices. They can also be used to shape and guide a long-term strategy for creating more effective online learning for better student outcomes.

What is humanized online learning?

Many students and instructors fear a lack of engagement or human connection in online learning environments. Research shows that students often feel online courses are less personal, offering an experience that can't possibly match that of face-to-face instruction. A lot of instructors report feeling the same way.

It doesn't have to be that way.

You simply need to humanize your course.

Tracy Schaelen, Distance Education Faculty Coordinator at Southwestern College, provides a basic welcome video to all her online students.

Welcome to Our Class!
907 views • Apr 23, 2018

In humanized learning, you foster and emphasize interpersonal relationships between students and instructors — and between the students themselves — that help support better educational outcomes. As an instructor, you create an environment where students view you as a partner in learning. They know your face and, through course videos and other methods, they learn your personality, as well.

According to Dr. Michelle Pacansky-Brock, humanized online learning "supports the non-cognitive components of learning and creates a culture of possibility for more students." By embracing differences between students and fostering a sense of belonging, it removes the potential for a cold, sterile learning environment and replaces it with one where students feel supported, cared for, and trusted.
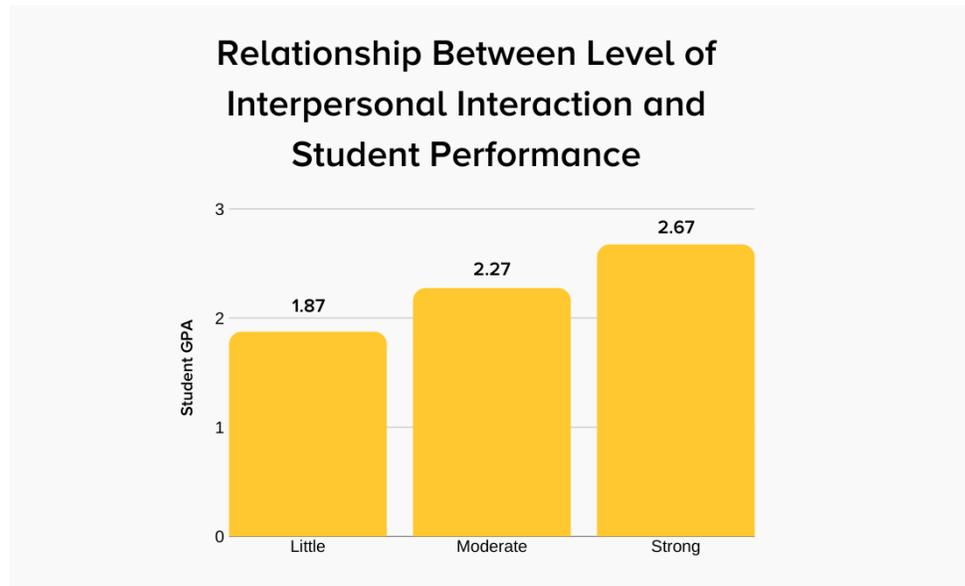
And, students in online courses who feel more connected to their instructors and fellow students are more successful.

> **For more information from Dr. Pacanasky-Brock on humanizing online courses, check out this infographic:**
> How to Humanize Your Online Class

1   https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1egqpikhqK5znx8STp01EMRSsvyrzpeDpaqfONZ_MTzo/edit?usp=sharing
2   https://brocansky.com/2015/04/infographic-how-to-humanize-your-online-class.html

Research from the Community College Resource Center showed that an online course's level of personal interaction is the most important factor in predicting student grades. In fact, they found that students in low-interaction courses earned nearly one letter grade lower than students in high-interaction courses.

Relationship Between Level of Interpersonal Interaction and Student Performance

A bar chart showing Student GPA on the y-axis (0 to 3) across three interaction levels: Little (1.87), Moderate (2.27), and Strong (2.67).

Humanized learning increases the relevance of content and improves students' motivation to log in week after week. When students relate to an online instructor as something more than a subject matter expert and begin to conceive of themselves as part of a larger community, they are more likely to be motivated, be satisfied with their learning, and succeed in their course objectives.

Benefits of humanized online learning:

- Creates a sense of trust and community.
- Motivates students to apply themselves so as to not let down their learning partner.
- Builds an inclusive learning environment.
- Supports the needs of all students.
- Ensures better student outcomes.

Best of all, creating humanized online learning experiences is within your grasp. You don't need to spend years or months learning a new way to teach.

You already know how to teach face-to-face, and we'll show you how you can take what you already know and apply it in new ways in your online course.

And one of the keys to that is asynchronous learning.

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1   https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/effective-online-instructor-presence.pdf

Synchronous vs. asynchronous learning

WHAT IS SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING?

For most instructors who have never taught an online course, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a quick and — let's face it — less-than-ideal transition to bringing courses online. For many, that meant giving lessons via live video chat platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet.

Synchronous Learning

Students and instructors are required to be in the same (virtual) space at the same time for learning to occur. There is likely little interaction apart from the video chats.

That's called synchronous learning. It tries to mimic face-to-face learning in online spaces.

Synchronous course structure limits important aspects of learning, forcing all students to learn at the same pace, without the flexibility to consume course content when and how they can. Students and faculty can experience mental fatigue from the pressure of trying to process highly compressed live video.

And, because everyone is expected to be available at the same time, students in different time zones or who must share technology resources with others in the households are at an immediate disadvantage.

While synchronous remote learning worked in the short-term as a stop-gap when there were no other options and no time to prepare, it is not the most effective way to teach online.

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1   https://insidehighered.com/advice/2020/05/06/pandemic-brings-home-need-focus-humane-and-meaningful-student-learning-experiences

WHAT IS ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING?

In asynchronous learning, lessons and lectures are given via pre-recorded videos. Students watch the videos in their own time, consuming as much or as little of the content at a time as they can. Students can go back and rewatch or review content as needed.


Asynchronous learning also allows students to better interact with course content through conversations with their peers, quizzes embedded directly in the course videos, and more.

Meanwhile, instructors can measure student engagement with the content through quiz results, and video analytics (such as who watched and for how long, etc.) Plus, by assigning points to watching videos, instructors can give more incentive to watch and pay attention.

And, because the course is more interactive, personable, and connected, students are better motivated. The flexibility to review content on their own schedule and at their own pace reduces stress and better accommodates different learning needs.

Plus, whether you're teaching 10, 1,000, or 10,000 people, the content scales to whatever size audience you have. And, because learners consume the content when and how it's right for them, there are no restrictions on time zones or geographic locations.

That doesn't mean that synchronous sessions aren't appropriate at times. But leveraging the advantages of asynchronous learning complements live interactions to extend the value of course content beyond the live sessions.
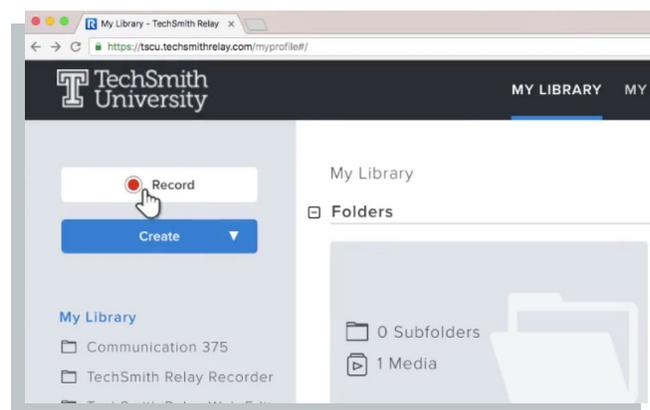
Why educators and students prefer asynchronous learning:

- Maximum flexibility for students and faculty.

- Easily scalable.

- Content can be refined and improved as needed.

- No restrictions on location/time of instruction.

- Complements synchronous learning time by extending content life.

- Motivates students to engage with course content, instructors, and their peers.

- Content can be reused for other courses without having to present live again and again.

- Content can be used in blended learning environments when face-to-face courses are available.

Asynchronous learning doesn't try to replicate the experience of face-to-face courses. It leverages the unique advantages of the online environment to provide a more comprehensive and connected learning experience for both students and instructors.

| Synchronous	VS	Asynchronous
at the same time		work at their own speed
live communication		communicate when convenient
less flexible		freedom and flexibility
meet at pre-scheduled times		work beyond scheduled times

What makes a quality online course?

Anyone can put a bunch of content in an LMS and call it online learning. But a truly effective quality online learning experience requires more — and students expect more. A quality online course goes beyond the information shared from instructor to student — it includes all the elements that lead to better learning.

Students want to feel their instructor cares about more than their grade

To be truly successful teaching online, instructors must actively and visibly engage with their students. Earlier in this guide, we referenced a study by the Community College Resource Center. That same research showed that students place a high value on interactions with their instructors, and their data shows that more instructor-student interactions led to better student outcomes.

When instructors use interactive technologies in a consistent and purposeful way, students feel a greater sense of teacher presence. For example, students felt more cared for when instructors used videos and were active in chat rooms and forums.

Providing quick feedback on student assignments or inquiries also made students feel a better connection to their teacher.

1   https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/effective-online-instructor-presence.pdf
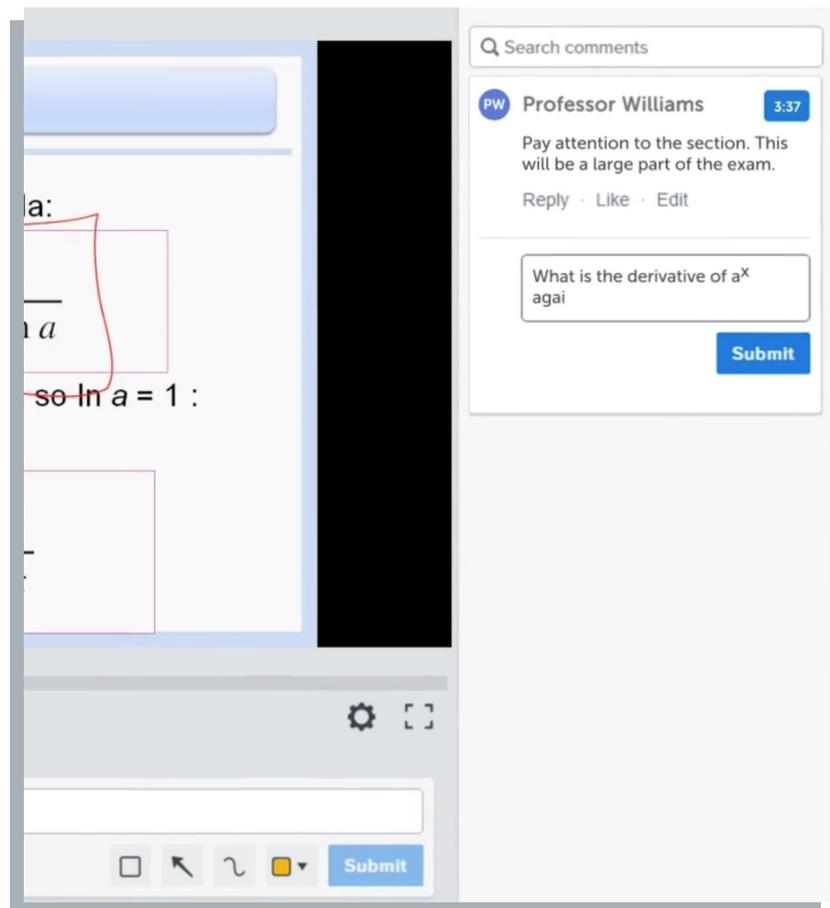
How do we assess quality?

Up until the early 2000s, course quality was determined by examining course content, pedagogy, and learning outcomes. Unfortunately, that method left out the most important part of learning — the learner's experience in the course!

Today, educators assess quality via a more process-oriented approach that includes such things as student needs, use of data and information for making decisions, improved learning outcomes, and more. Popular models for course assessment include the Online Learning Consortium's Five Pillars of Quality Online Education and the Quality Matters Rubric.

Five Pillars of Quality Online Education

LEARNING **FACULTY** **STUDENTS** **SCALE** **ACCESS**
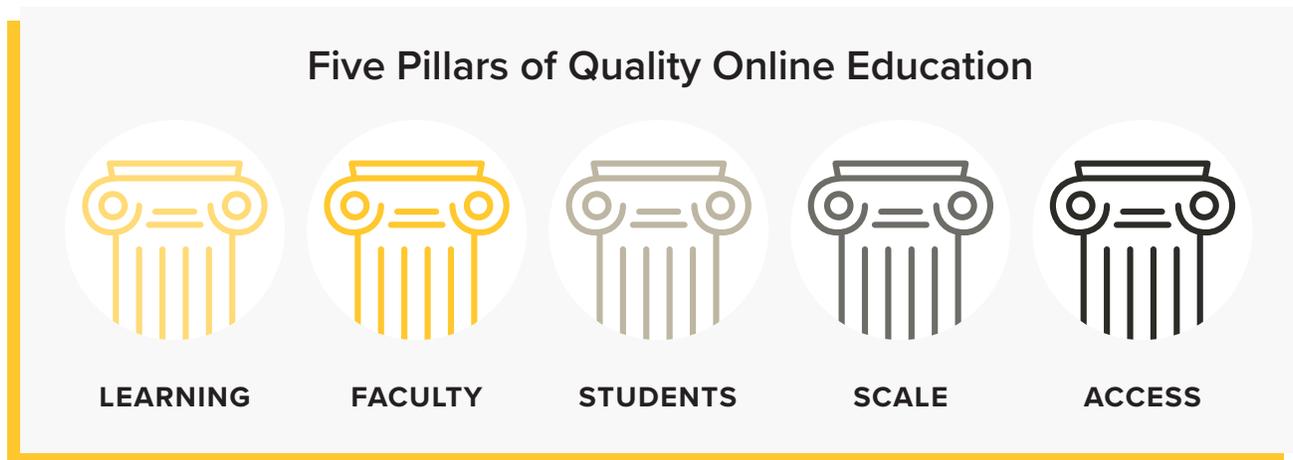
To truly assess the quality of online learning, you must go beyond simple course design and acknowledge the importance of the nuances that make a course unique. Rather than assessing a single point in time, it should look at the whole course over time. It must also include the student experience.

A good course assessment considers the interactions between instructor and student, students with their peers, and the overall sense of community provided by the instructor and the online learning environment. These can be assessed via examining emails or student forum posts, dialogue within forums, feedback from group interactions, end-of-course surveys, LMS reports on student interactions, student assignment results, and more.

In other words, good course assessment measures the humanizing principles that make education more than just learning facts and figures.

1   https://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2015/05/26/how-good-is-your-online-course-five-steps-to-assess-course-quality/
2   https://www.qualitymatters.org/qa-resources/rubric-standards

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7 key principles of quality learning

In 1987, Drs. Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson published "The Seven Principles of Good Practice in Higher Education" in the American Association for Higher Education Bulletin. The article highlighted the results of their two-year research into how to improve undergraduate learning in higher education.

They concluded that the most effective undergraduate education:

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty.

2. Develops cooperation among students.

3. Promotes active learning.

4. Provides prompt feedback.

5. Facilitates time on task.

6. Communicates high expectations.

7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Interestingly, none of the principles address the actual course content. Instead, they found that the interpersonal experiences of the students best determines the quality of learning.

Of course, in 1987 no one considered how these principles would apply in an online learning environment. However, in 1996, Chickering and Dr. Stephen Ehrmann updated the principles to show how technology could support the principles in an online classroom.

In essence, they argued that — used properly — the (at the time) new tools and technologies afforded by the internet, software, and others could enhance and improve the online learning experience for both students and instructors. In fact, they suggested that asynchronous learning would be key.

Humanizing your content through video and by encouraging student interactions with their peers and instructor provides the type of experience Chickering and Gamson identified as the most important aspects for quality learning.

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1   https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246430027_Implementing_the_Seven_Principles_Technology_as_Lever

How to build an effective online course

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU BUILD YOUR COURSE

Every great course begins with a plan, and the more thought you give to your course structure, resources, activities, and assessments, the less you'll have to think on the fly. Before you begin building your course, gather everything you will need. You will be organized and ready to create a well-thought-out online learning experience.

Fortunately, if you've already been teaching your course in person, you likely have most of what you need. You just need to prepare it for the pivot to online learning.

1. Identify your sources

If you've taught this course before, you have a head start. You can re-use all the materials from your in-person course for your online course. First time teaching this course? You can either develop your own core course resources from scratch, or ask to share existing materials from a colleague or your department head.

2. Gather resources

Put all your course materials in one place such as a folder on your computer or on Google Drive, OneDrive, or a similar online file storage system, etc., so you can clearly see everything and can access what you need when you need it.

Include your syllabus, presentations and lectures, course packs, textbooks, quizzes, handouts, online resources, links, and notes from previous semesters. This is also a great time to make sure what you have still fits your needs or add anything new you think would help students grasp the topics.

3. Digitize what you need

If you still have resources that are print-only, you can, photograph, or otherwise digitize them for sharing online. You don't necessarily need a fancy scanner. Just snap a photo of your printed document. Some software such as Snagit can extract text from your photo, if you prefer. You might need to digitize less than you think — many print materials are also now available on the web, with a little searching.

A word of caution, though: Remember that any document you digitize must be accessible to students who use assistive technologies such as a screen reader. That means photos of text documents won't work. Be sure you extract the text from your photo into a true digital document to ensure accessibility.

If you build your course materials from scratch, you have the advantage to specifically choose content that is already web-based, engaging, and interactive.

> With TechSmith Snagit you can create incredible course materials by taking and editing screenshots and simple screen recordings to create powerful visuals. Snagit also offers professionally designed templates to help you go from idea to finished document in a few clicks.

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1   https://www.techsmith.com/blog/extract-text-from-image/

Once you have your materials in order, you are in a good spot to plan the details of how you'll deliver your online course.
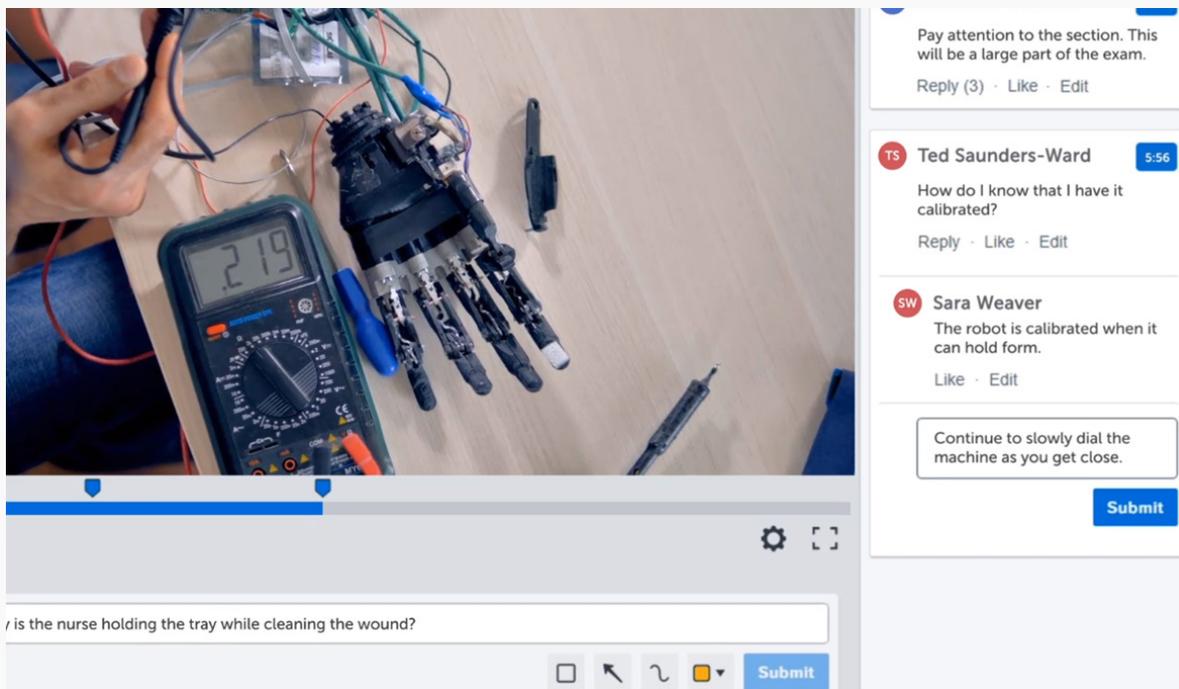
Map your course modules

Based on your course's competencies or knowledge objectives, organize your themes into logical topics so that similar skills or themes are taught together. Aim for five to seven major themes in your course. These will become your modules.

For each module, outline key concepts, which activities and resources you will include, and any academic or technical terms students should learn. Different modules can be different lengths, depending on how long you'd like to spend on each one, and how long it takes for students to learn the material.

Pro tip: Keep online delivery in mind!

Build ways for students to interact with you and their classmates. In-video conversations, virtual group projects, and collaborative problem-solving are all ways to encourage humanized interaction. Including guest lecturers is another great way to include different perspectives, too.

In this interactive conversation within Knowmia (formerly TechSmith Relay), classmates discuss details of an assignment and are able to ask and answer questions conveniently within the video.

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1   https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-techsmith-relay-conversations.html

Create learning objectives

What do you expect students to learn? Set three to five clear learning objectives for each module. This will not only help you focus your teaching, it will also help students know the expectations up front.

Objectives should build on their prior knowledge and offer clear ways to measure progress and success.

Think of Bloom's taxonomy to assign varied levels of thinking (Skills, Knowledge, and Attitude), or simply use action verbs to create expectations of how students can show their progress. For example, at the end of a module, students will be able to identify the parts of a cell, explain their function, and discuss why each part is important to the whole.

A.B.C.D

A AUDIENCE

B BEHAVIOR

C CONDITION

D DEGREE

Based on best practices from Quality Matters, the A.B.C.D. (Audience, Behavior, Condition, and Degree) method *is a good way to* structure learning objectives.

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1   https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8MKcD1rcHnkRjBESTlPU2RTS2s/view
2   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gskWFx39EQg&feature=youtu.be
3   http://www.personal.psu.edu/bxb11/Objectives/

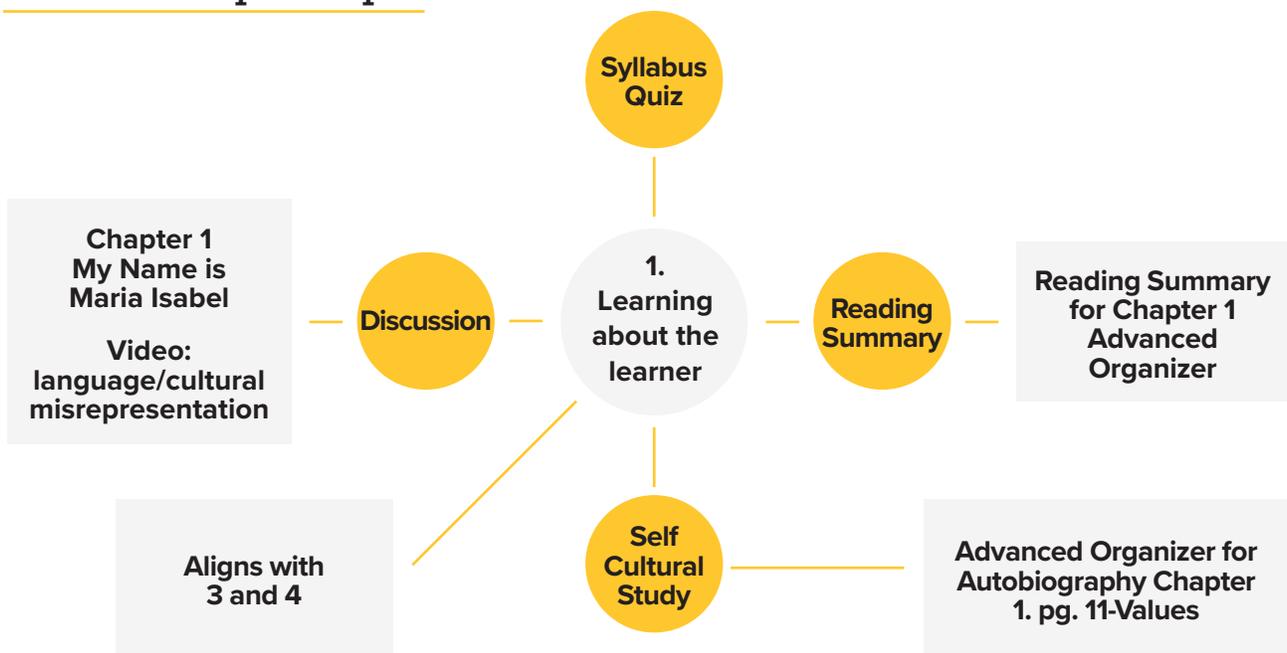**Align modules with learning objectives**

Look at the activities and materials in each module to ensure that they help promote the learning objectives. Does each presentation, video lesson, and or activity help the student learn, practice, or show what they know?

This conceptual framework will help make sure that you only include things in your course that align with overall objectives. Anything outside the framework can still be included, but you can label it as supplemental.

> Pro tip: Don't be afraid to include extra content and activities in your course videos and other materials for students who may want to learn more! It can help inspire students' imagination, connect with different styles of learners, and bring more depth to the core content.

Be as detailed as possible in this stage. List all the materials, technical resources, class activities, and assignments in the module and how they will help further the learning objectives.

Module Map Sample

Syllabus Quiz

Chapter 1
My Name is
Maria Isabel

Video:
language/cultural
misrepresentation

Discussion

1.
Learning
about the
learner

Reading
Summary

Reading Summary
for Chapter 1
Advanced
Organizer

Aligns with
3 and 4

Self
Cultural
Study

Advanced Organizer for
Autobiography Chapter
1. pg. 11-Values

Determine how to assess learning

How will you ensure students learn the concepts? Similar to standards in face-to-face courses, online course rubrics need to meet quality standards, too.

While summative assessment evaluates learning at the end of a semester or module, formative assessment measures learning throughout a time period quickly enough to improve learning outcomes.

As an instructor, formative assessment helps you adjust learning or step in to help struggling students while there is still time. It also gives students critical feedback as to their progress so they can increase their focus to meet objectives.

One type of formative assessment, CATS (Classroom Assessment Technique), provides a structure that helps students participate and apply knowledge as they go to assure better engagement. This is especially helpful in online courses.
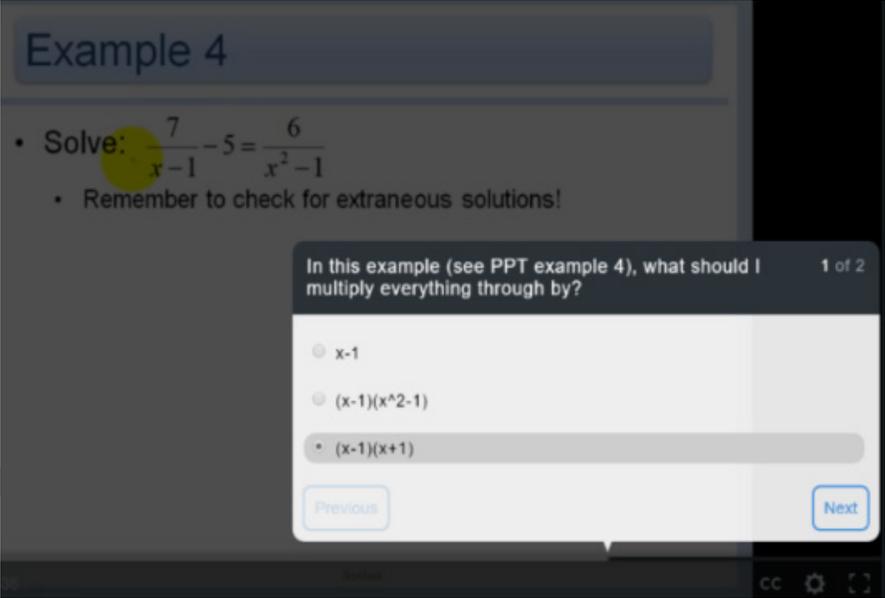
Some of the best quizzing tools (like Knowmia and Camtasia) let you assess learning directly within video lessons, and require participation before the student is allowed to continue to lesson.

All types of assessment can be accomplished in online courses, through quizzing (M/C, T/F, and long-answer), essay submissions, online class and small group discussions, individual and/or small group projects, and video projects, reports, and demonstrations.

1   https://www.qualitymatters.org/qa-resources/rubric-standards/higher-ed-rubric
2   https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/cats/

Why video makes a difference

We've all had the experience of getting an email or text message from someone and wondering if the tone was positive or negative. And we've all wondered whether we needed to add an exclamation point to a sentence to let the recipient know we weren't angry.

The truth is, it's hard to gauge a person's intent or personality through text alone.

Now, imagine an online course where all communication is text-based:

- Interaction between students and the instructor was done by email and/or discussion forums.

- For students, the only glimpse of their instructor's face might be a profile photo on their bio.

- Instructors likely would never see their students' faces.

- Students might not interact with each other at all or only through impersonal discussion forums.

As a student, would you feel connected to your instructor or other students?

As an instructor, would you feel you know your students and could effectively gauge their understanding of course content?

Of course not.

To create a truly engaging and connected learning environment, you have to put more of yourself into your course. Your students go to college to learn from expert instructors and they want to see and hear from you. Let your personality show in your content. And give your students the opportunity to do the same.
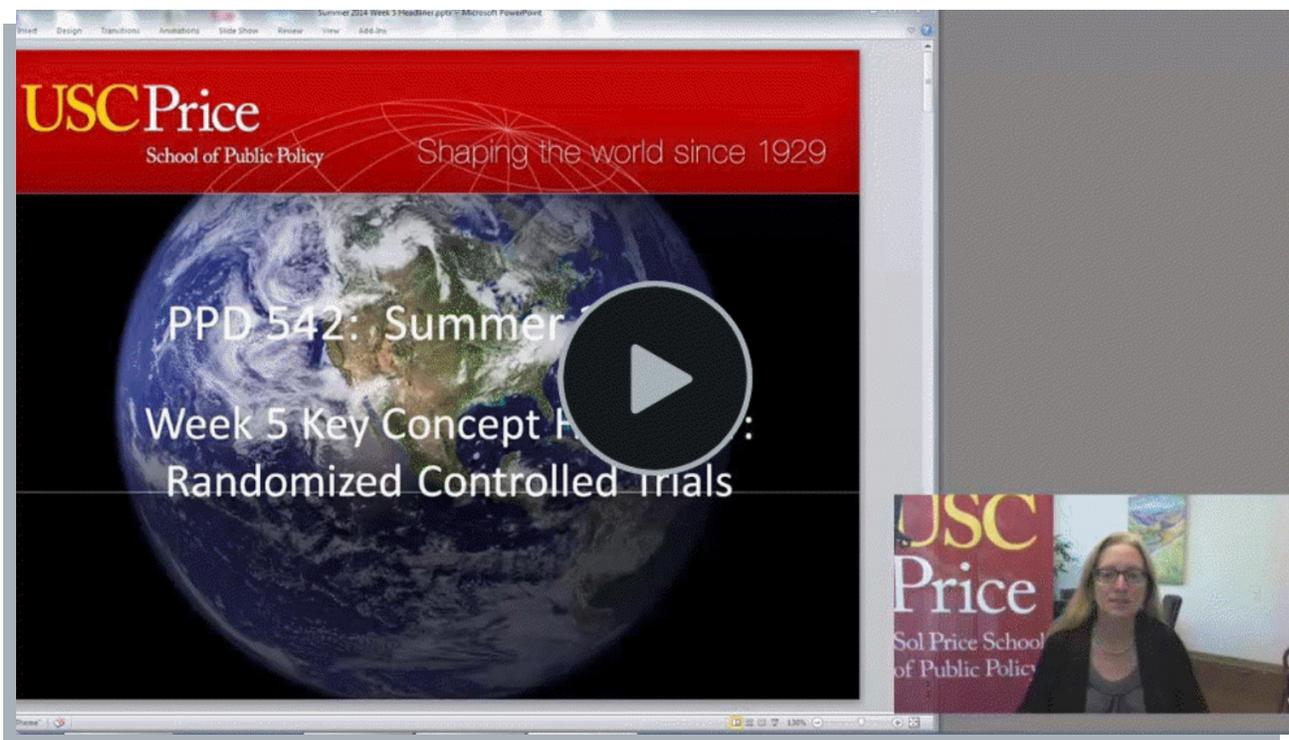
That's where video comes in. Video has a number of benefits for online learning, including:

- Creating presence.

- Increasing engagement.

- They're measurable.

- They have many uses.

- They're reusable.

- They easily integrate with most learning management systems.

In their landmark study, "How Video Production Affects Student Engagement: An Empirical Study of MOOC Videos," Phillip Guo, Juho Kim, and Rob Rubin used data from 6.9 million video sessions in online courses, measuring engagement by how long students watched videos and whether they attempted to answer post-video assessment questions.

[They concluded that video is essential to online learning, but found that some types of videos worked better than others](#).

Most importantly, they found that:

- Shorter videos (up to about 15 minutes) are more engaging.

- Videos that intersperse an instructor's talking head with slides are more engaging than slides alone.

- Videos produced with more personal feel could be more engaging than videos with higher production values.

- Videos where instructors speak fairly fast and with enthusiasm are more engaging.

This is great news for instructors, especially anyone who may be new to creating videos. Even simple videos can increase student engagement and improve learning outcomes. In fact, the study showed that videos with high production values were less engaging and effective for students than less professional videos.

> **"Students don't really care if I make a mistake, have a bad hair day, or sneeze on video,"**
> **says Tracy Schaelen, Distance Education Faculty Coordinator at Southwestern College.**
> **"They want to see me — the real person, not a professional spokesperson."**

So, you need to create videos. But no one expects a Hollywood production. In fact, they'd rather have something more authentic and personal.

But even the prospect of creating simple videos can strike fear into anyone who's never made a video.

Creating video doesn't have to be a monumental task. You don't have to be a video professional to create effective video content for your online courses. With a few simple tips and easy-to-use tools, anyone can create great video content.

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1   http://up.csail.mit.edu/other-pubs/las2014-pguo-engagement.pdf

Building your course with video

Once you've planned your online course content, it's time to start building. And if you've read this far, you know that video content is one of the most essential parts of ensuring an online learning environment that meets students' needs.

Here are a few ways you can deliver content to your students using engaging and interesting visuals.

7 types of videos you need to make

Humanizing your course content means letting your students get to know you. They need to see your face and hear your voice to feel truly engaged with the learning environment. Video gives you a simple way to create a sense of connectedness and community, no matter where you are.

Video has many key benefits, including:

- It's an excellent medium for sharing information.

- It allows for asynchronous delivery of content.

- It provides an unparalleled way to showcase your personality.

- It allows for real-time assessment.

Pre-recorded course videos allow students to consume the content on their own schedule and at their own pace. Interactive features, such as quizzes, can foster engagement with content and help you assess in real time whether students understand key concepts.

In fact, research shows that in-video quizzes reduced mind wondering by 50%, increased note-taking by 300%, and improved outcomes on final exams by 42%.

Students who need one-on-one time may still schedule personal chats or meetings, but most learning will happen via course videos. Some instructors use results from in-video quizzes and/or analytics on which students are not completing video assignments to address those students directly so they don't fall too far behind early in the course.

So, video is essential to humanizing your courses and asynchronous online learning, but what types of videos should you create?

Here are seven types of videos that are highly effective for online courses that will grab (and hold) your students' attention -- no matter where they are.
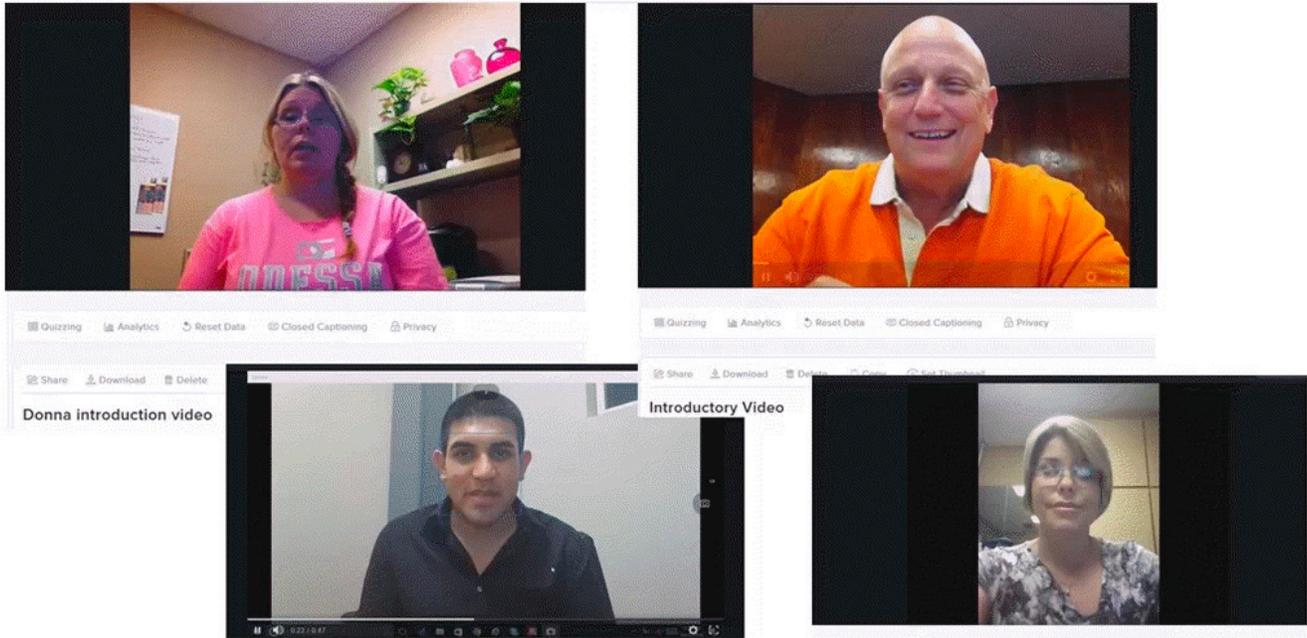
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3631699/

1. Intro video

An introductory video at the beginning of any online course helps set the stage for better student engagement and provides a good starting point.

It doesn't need to be fancy.

It's a quick and easy video to create and can be incredibly helpful to students. Use this video to introduce yourself and share some fun facts about yourself and your background. This can help you seem more human and accessible to your students. Sharing what makes you unique can jump-start a student's interest in the course material and cultivate a strong teacher-student relationship.
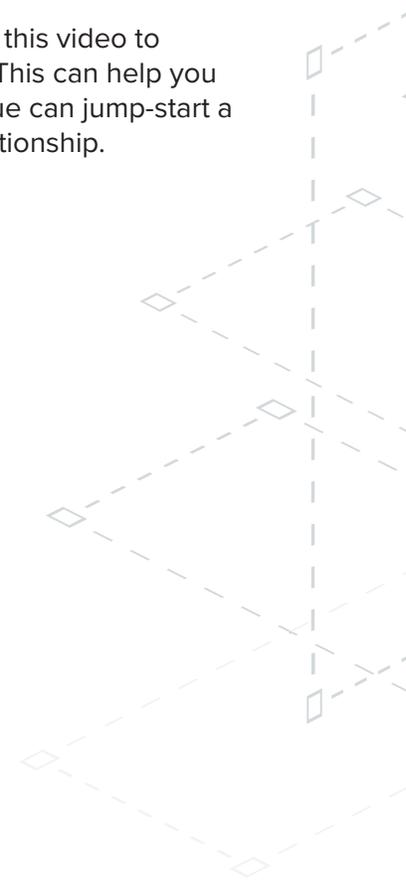
2. Course navigation video

Students need to understand the course organization and how to access class material. This video should cover how to navigate to the course calendar, where to find the syllabus, where to submit assignments, and other commonly used online pages or course tools.

The more in-depth your online course navigation video, the fewer repetitive questions you'll get from students about where to find materials.

Want to go even further in reducing unnecessary and repetitive "Where do I find X?" questions? Add quizzes through your video to ensure that students absorb the information, or make these a conversation where other students can answer and see the responses.

Make these videos required viewing and assign points to them to make students accountable for watching.
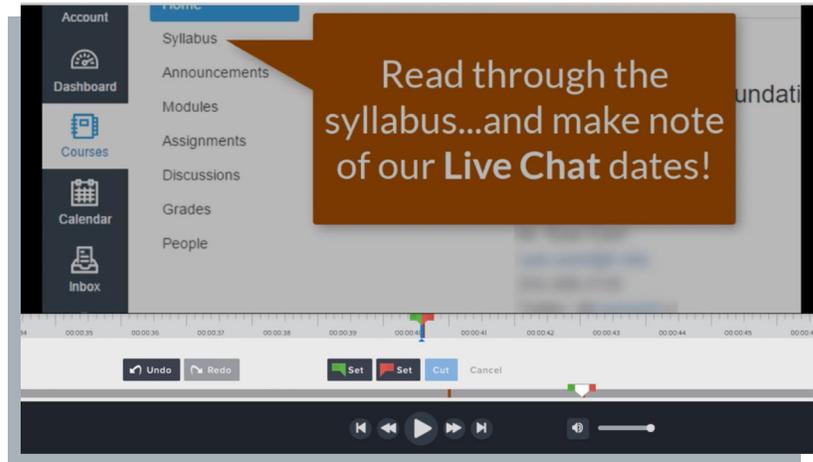
3. New week, topic, or unit video

Use this video to give students an overview of what to expect in the coming week, topic, or unit.

Students appreciate knowing what's coming and will feel more connected to you and your online course if they're consistently made aware of the course content and schedule.

Additionally, they can use the information to better plan their time for absorbing the week's course content around their other obligations.

This is also a great opportunity for you to:

- Express your excitement about the upcoming material

- Share highlights or interesting tidbits can really help students feel more connected to you and to the content as a whole.

- Tell students what you're looking forward to teaching, perhaps even including some cliffhangers.

These previews can help to facilitate and maintain a personal connection throughout the duration of your course.

4. Walkthrough videos

Simple how-to videos that accompany online course materials or assignments can be incredibly helpful to students who might otherwise miss the help and interactions they might expect from face-to-face learning.
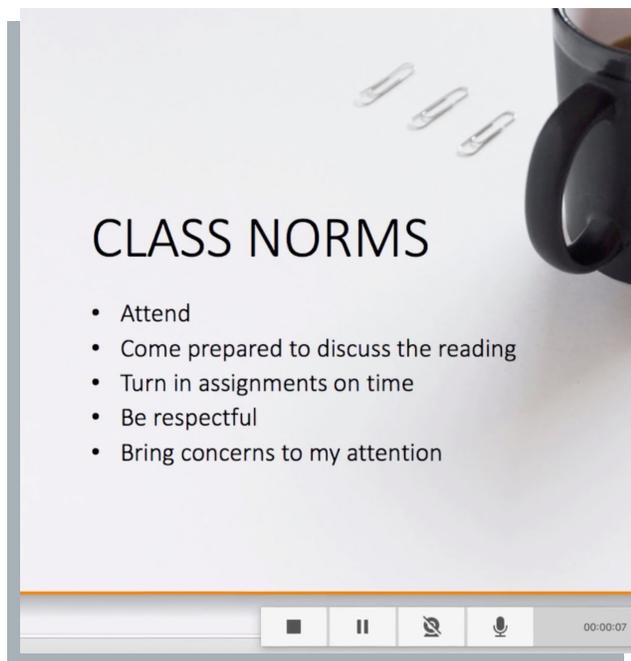
There's no need to get dressed up or go all out with production. Students will respond best if you seem more personable and approachable. In fact, some informality is encouraged!

What to cover in your walkthrough videos:

- Syllabus
- Course Schedule
- Lab procedures
- Project or report details
- Using class discussion forums
- Submitting assignments
- Taking quizzes and assessments
- Due dates, timelines, and other goals

# 5. Assignment and project feedback videos

Rather than sending students written feedback, try recording it as a short video.

Video helps you explain your markups and comments about an assignment and give students a better understanding of how they can make improvements. It's also a great opportunity to give extra demonstrations or explanations for a particular student if you observe a repetitive error.

Plus, video allows you to express more empathy and encourage students in ways that text never will. Students will appreciate hearing your voice on feedback rather than red marks on papers.

Students taking online courses will appreciate the effort you made to connect with them. This personalized and conversational feedback will help them feel valued and engaged with your course.

These can be VERY informal and do not need to be excessively long. No need for high production values here, either. Just turn on your webcam and microphone, and hit record. Edit out any major mistakes if you need to, but for the most part these should be quick and easy.

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1   https://www.techsmith.com/blog/how-to-video-examples/
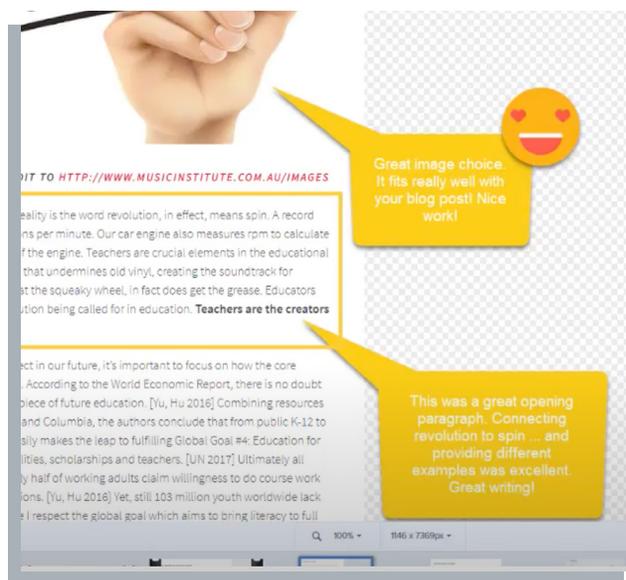
6. Presentation recordings

You probably already have a ton of presentations and/or slide decks for your course, moving them online is easy! Screen recording is a great way to present lecture slides in real time with your commentary.

But remember, students want to see your face. Consider adding your webcam too! Students will feel more connected to you if they can see your enthusiasm as you teach. You can also record your computer audio for playing youtube videos, sound bites, and more.

7. Concise video lessons

Video lectures — the backbone of any effective online course. Your students rely on these videos to learn course material and understand the topics of discussion.

Rather than recording hour-long lectures of yourself simply talking over presentation slides or standing in front of a makeshift lectern, try to shorten your videos and make them more interactive. Shorter clips are easier to digest (and faster for you to produce and caption) and will feel more consumable.

Keep in mind this is about personality and engagement. Show your face! As noted above, while you can record anything on your screen or show presentation slides, include your webcam, too. Make sure your students can clearly see your face.

Don't record yourself from far away as if they were watching you from the back of a lecture hall. Instead, try a nice shot of you behind a desk or a more casual setting.

Adding interactive components, such as quizzes, can also help engage students and make them feel more involved with your online course.

1   https://www.techsmith.com/blog/record-your-desktop/
2   https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-camtasia-add-interactive-hotspots-to-a-video.html
3   https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-camtasia-quizzing.html

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5 ways to make your course videos more engaging and accessible today

Getting people to watch videos isn't as challenging as getting them to engage and learn. Luckily, there are five ways to make your videos more engaging and accessible right now!

1. Create interactive quizzes

Adding quizzes to your course videos keeps a viewer's attention and helps ensure continued engagement. To answer the questions correctly, the viewer must listen to what is being presented.

Quizzes also allow instructors to assess in real-time students' understanding of key concepts.
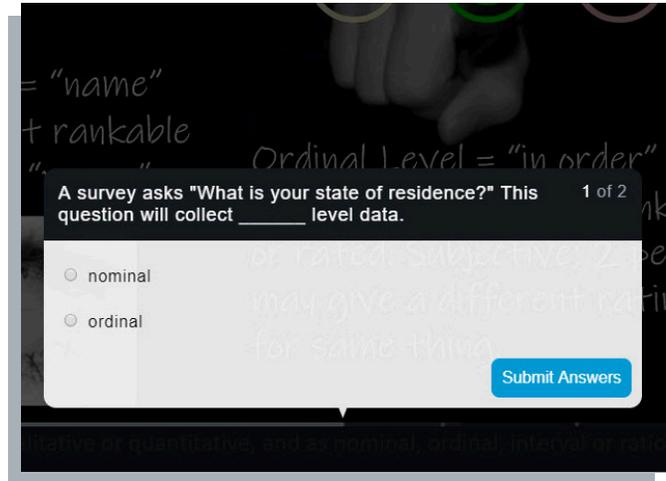
2. Add captions

If a viewer is unable to listen to the audio of a video, it is helpful to include video captions or subtitles.

Captions are text, at the bottom of the video, that transcribe what is being said or described. They should also identify any important sound-effects or off-screen action that would otherwise be inaccessible to anyone who can't hear the audio or has the sound turned down.
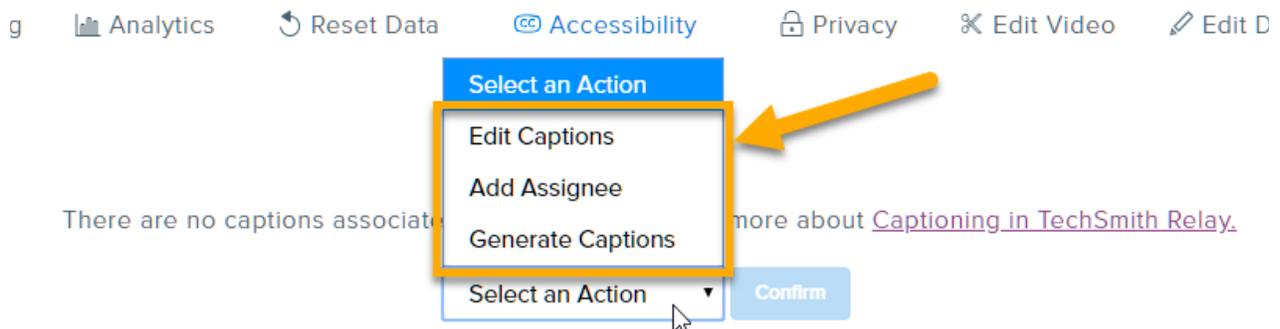
There are two types of captions — open and closed. Open captions automatically appear on a video, while closed captions allow the viewer to turn them on or off. In general, closed captions are preferred.

Captions also make your content searchable. And, captions are required for accessibility of your content. WIthout captions, viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing will not be able to access the course video content.

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3. Use motion and graphics

Videos with simple text and images could fall flat with viewers. Without motion, viewers can become bored and may tune out.

You don't have to over-do it, though.

Rather than inserting a simple image, create a graphic of your data and give it movement. That can be as simple as an arrow that appears to highlight key information or zooming in on an image to better show details.

[Camtasia Behaviors | TechSmith](#)
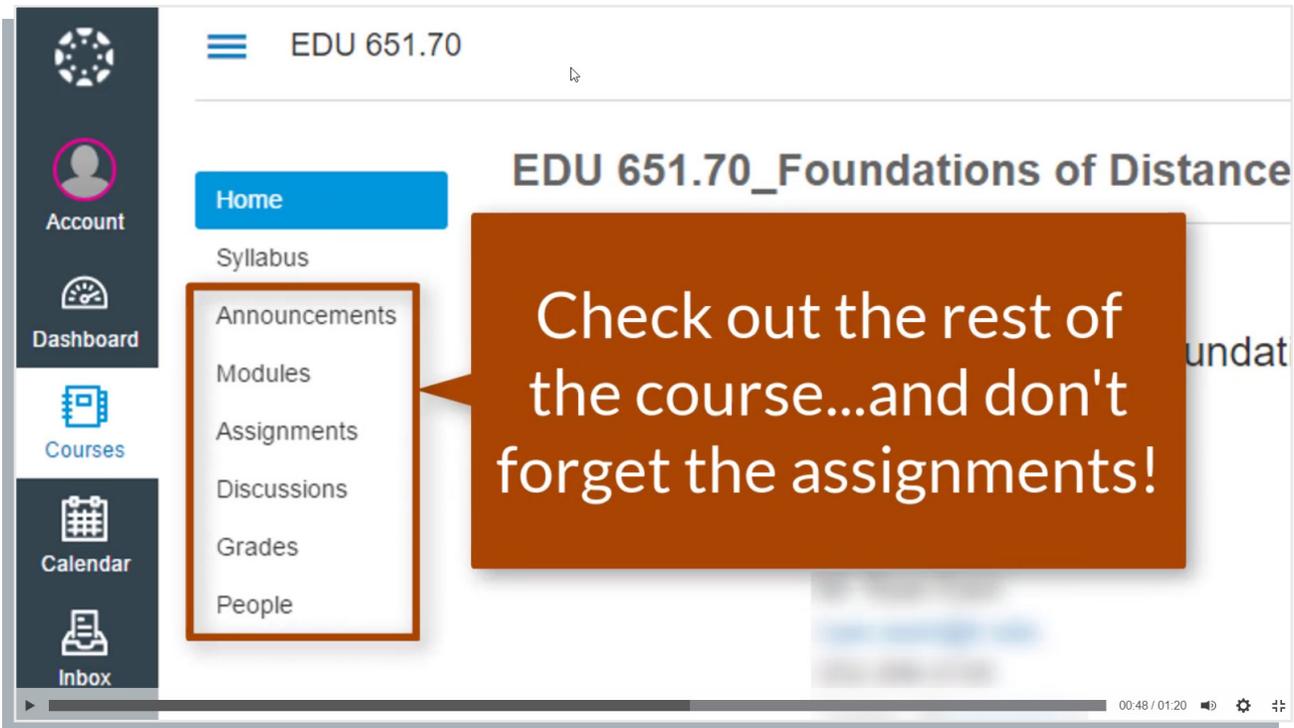
The use of motion in graphics can replace text. What can be written in a 1,500 word article can be visually explained in a one-minute video and will attract more viewers.

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1   https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-camtasia-behaviors.html?wvideo=9k7wfwt08s

4. Create a table of contents

A table of contents provides your viewer with a quick way to find specific information or topics in your course videos. They are especially useful for longer videos.

As noted above, shorter videos are generally more engaging for students, but occasionally a longer video may be necessary. In those cases, give your students a table of contents. Students will love them for going back to review course content or get a better understanding of concepts before assignments and/or tests.

5. Use hotspots

A hotspot is trackable, clickable content that is embedded directly in the video that provides additional information or resources about topics being covered. They can be links to other websites, downloadable documents, or even links to another video series.

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1   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP612ekOwgE&feature=youtu.be
2   https://www.beyondprivatelabel.com/bpl-product-feature-video-hotspots/

Asynchronous, humanized online courses provide the learning experience your students desire — and deserve

While many students and instructors alike have considered online learning to be less effective and engaging than face-to-face environments, it simply doesn't have to be that way. But trying to replicate the live learning experience in an online course won't produce the results students desire. By humanizing your content and taking advantage of the benefits of asynchronous learning, you can build online courses that not only rival the on-campus experience — but even exceed it.

For more information on many of the topics covered in this guide, check out theses resources:

- What is Distance Learning? The Complete Guide (2020)

- Resources to Effectively Transitions to Remote Work and Learning

- How to Train Faculty to Create Quality Online Courses

- Create Effective Course Videos (Checklist)

- How to Record a Presentation

- Video Length: How Long Should Your Instructional Videos Be?

- Learning Online 101: How to Teach Online Course Skills that Improve Student Success

Even if you've never created an online course, you can ease your stress and give your students the online learning experience they deserve!

Who is TechSmith?

For more than 30 years, TechSmith has helped people use visuals and video to share knowledge, teach and train students and colleagues — and generally show what they know.
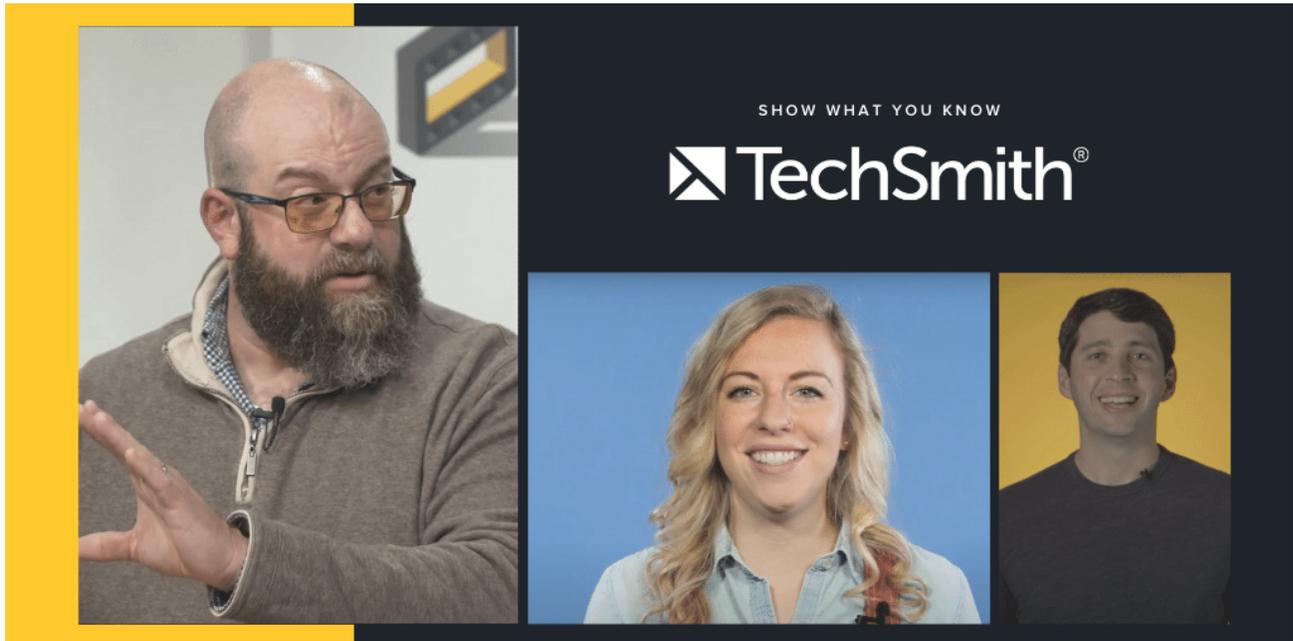
And we're no strangers to higher education. In fact, with our versatile and easy-to-use tools Snagit, Camtasia, and Knowmia (formerly TechSmith Relay), we've helped hundreds of thousands of instructors around the world create and share video and other visual content that turns online classes into active learning communities.

Whether you've never created an online course or you're a seasoned veteran, we created this guide to show anyone how you can easily create online learning communities that engage, excite, and motivate your students — and help them succeed.

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Show What You Know

TechSmith Snagit™   TechSmith Camtasia™   TechSmith Knowmia®
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