

Optimizing Self-Recording for Educators and Faculty

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Self-recording has become an essential skill for educators, instructors, and faculty members, especially in the era of online learning.

This guide provides best practices for self-recording to ensure high-quality video content that engages students and supports their learning experience. Whether you're new to self-recording or looking to improve your technique, these tips will help you create professional and effective video clips and/or presentations.

This guide is your go-to resource for best practices and key insights on creating high-quality self-recorded videos. Educators can lean upon this guide to enhance their video content. Each recommendation has been vetted and curated by iDesign's Video Services team.

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Key Takeaways

1

First Impressions Matter

High-quality videos reflect professionalism and effort, making a strong first impression on students.

2

Preparation is Key

Test all equipment and settings before recording to avoid technical issues and ensure a smooth recording process.

3

Proper Framing and Lighting

Position the camera slightly above your eyeline, use lighting, and ensure your background is clean.

4

Prioritize Audio Quality

Use external microphones for clear audio and be mindful of background noise in your recording environment.

5

Engaging Content

Keep videos concise and well-structured. Use teleprompter applications for eye contact if a script is involved.

The Rise of Self-Recording

Self-recording allows educators to deliver personalized and engaging lessons, replicating the in-person classroom environment. As students become more accustomed to digital content, the demand for professional and well-structured video presentations has grown. Self-recording empowers educators to control the quality and delivery of their materials, enhancing online and hybrid courses to be more dynamic and responsive to student needs.

Self-recording is a valuable tool in the online education toolbox, not meant for a 1:1 lecture time conversion. Instead, it serves as asynchronous “facetime” with students, ensuring they feel the expertise and experience of the course is coming from a person.

Defining Self-Capture

Self-capture involves using platforms that allow you to control the audio and video capture while creating your own content. This approach is valuable for educators who need to produce high-quality instructional videos independently. You have complete control over the recording environment with self-capture, enabling you to achieve the best results.



Best Practices and Tips



VIDEO TIPS

Importance of Video Quality

The quality of your video is crucial for several reasons.

- **First Impressions:**
Your video serves as the first impression for your students. High-quality videos reflect the effort and professionalism you put into your teaching materials.
- **Consistency in Quality:**
High-quality videos demonstrate that you hold your online courses to the same standards of excellence as you do your in-person classes. This consistency in quality can enhance student engagement and overall learning outcomes.



VIDEO TIPS

Framing

Proper framing is essential to ensure that you appear well within the video frame.



- **Camera Position:**

Position your webcam slightly above your eyeline for the most flattering angle. Elevate your laptop, even if it means using a stack of books.

- **Rule of Thirds:**

Position your eyes around the upper third of the frame for a balanced composition. By aligning your eyes with the top third of the frame, this helps to draw viewers' attention to your face, making your presentation more engaging.

- **Centering:**

Center yourself horizontally in the frame and avoid sitting too far back from the camera. Aim to fill the frame appropriately. This means your face and upper torso should be visible, providing a clear view of your expressions and gestures.



VIDEO TIPS

Lighting

Lighting significantly impacts the quality of your video. Follow these guidelines to achieve the best possible lighting.

1.

Control:

Have control over your lighting setup to ensure consistency.

2.

Direction:

Use front or side lighting to illuminate your face evenly. Avoid backlighting and overhead lighting, which can create uneven and unflattering shadows.

3.

Natural Light:

Utilize windows for natural light, but be aware of the sun's direction and intensity. Use curtains or blinds to diffuse the light for a softer effect.

4.

Artificial Light:

Use LED lamps with diffused bulbs or lamp shades.



This is an example of good lighting.



This is an example of bad lighting.



This is an example of bad lighting.



VIDEO TIPS

Audio

Poor audio can make it difficult for students to understand your content. Consider these tips when capturing audio.

- **Environment:**

Listen to your recording environment for background noise. Choose a quiet space and be mindful of noise sources like fans or traffic.

- **Equipment:**

Use external microphones for better audio quality. Avoid using wireless earbuds, which often have poor audio fidelity.





VIDEO TIPS

Background

Your background should be clean and distraction-free. Different platforms offer various background options.



This is an example of a clean background.



This is an example of a cluttered background.

- **Virtual Backgrounds:**

Platforms like Zoom offer virtual and blurred backgrounds. Ensure you have good lighting for these to work effectively.

- **Clean Backgrounds:**

If virtual backgrounds are not an option, maintain a simple, tidy background. Avoid personal photographs or clutter.



VIDEO TIPS



This is an example of a muted pattern.



This is an example of a busy pattern.

Attire

Your clothing choice can affect how you appear on camera.

- **Contrast:**
Wear clothing that contrasts with your background.
For instance, wear dark colors against a light background.
- **Avoid Patterns:**
Patterns can create visual artifacts and are best avoided.
Stick to solid, muted colors.



VIDEO TIPS

Equipment

Investing in the right equipment can significantly enhance your recording quality.



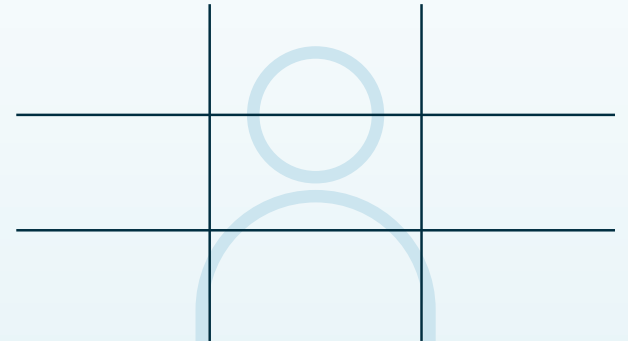
Webcam:

An external webcam usually offers better resolution than built-in laptop cameras. Aim for a webcam that supports full HD (1920x1080) or higher.



Microphone:

External microphones provide superior audio quality. Consider using podcast microphones or lavalier mics for the best results.



Recording Software:

Use reliable recording software like Zoom, OpenReel, or Riverside.fm, depending on your needs and budget. These platforms offer various features to optimize your recordings from the beginning.



VIDEO TIPS

Content Creation

When creating video content, consider the following tips.

1.

Video Length:

Keep your videos concise to maintain student engagement. Aim for shorter videos that are more likely to be fully viewed.

2.

Narrative Structure:

Structure your content with a clear introduction, engaging body, and concise conclusion. Ensure your content is easy to follow and understand.

3.

Teleprompter Use:

If you are reading from a script, use a teleprompter feature in your software to maintain eye contact with the camera.

Tools to consider

Editing your videos can enhance their quality and engagement. Here are some free and low-cost video editing tools to consider.

FREE

- **iMovie:**
Available for Mac users, iMovie offers a user-friendly interface and a range of features for editing video, adding effects, and creating professional-looking videos.

FREE

- **DaVinci Resolve:**
Known for its professional-grade editing capabilities, DaVinci Resolve offers features for video editing, color correction, and audio post-production.

FREE

- **HitFilm Express:**
A video editing and visual effects software that provides a range of tools for high-quality videos. It's suitable for beginners and experienced editors.

\$

- **Adobe Rush or Premier Elements:**
These tools simplify the interface and cost compared to the industry-standard Adobe Premiere. Adobe Rush and Premiere Elements offer essential features needed for basic video editing, making them more accessible.

\$

- **Adobe Creative Cloud:**
As an industry-standard creative software suite, Adobe Creative Cloud includes Adobe Premiere Pro for advanced video editing. While it is more costly, it offers a comprehensive set of tools for professional-grade editing, if desired.

A Powerful Tool: Self-Recording

Self-recording can be a powerful tool for educators, allowing you to create high-quality, engaging instructional videos. Remember to continuously test and refine your setup to achieve the best possible results. By following these best practices, you can ensure that your videos reach more people and reflect the professionalism and dedication you bring to your teaching.

How iDesign Uses Self-Recording

iDesign values self-recording for enhancing communication, fostering engagement, and streamlining processes with both external partners and internal teams.

With External Partners

For partners without internal video resources, like a studio, self-recording is a key component in developing effective course materials. Here's how it benefits our collaborations:

- **Direct-to-Camera with Multimedia Integration:** Instructors can self-record direct-to-camera video that includes slides, screen sharing, or other embedded content. This approach makes lessons more interactive and engaging, helping to hold students attention and improve their understanding.
- **Virtual Demonstrations or Walkthroughs:** Educators can record themselves performing demonstrations or walkthroughs using screencasts. These provide students with a visual and practical understanding of complex concepts. These videos can be paused and rewatched, or followed along as students perform the described demonstrations, aiding in comprehension and retention.
- **Feedback Videos:** Provide feedback on assignments and projects that can be self-recorded by instructors. Answer commonly asked questions. Address common errors and misunderstandings about assignments. This method allows for more detailed and nuanced feedback, helping guide students through the course more efficiently.
- **Interviews and Guest Speakers:** Use self-capture to interview industry experts or provide structured guest lectures. This adds diverse perspectives and provides industry expertise to the course content. These videos can potentially be used across multiple classes to maximize their impact.

For Internal Teams

Self-recording is equally valuable for internal communication and cross-team collaboration at iDesign. Here's how we leverage self-recording internally:

- **Team Updates:** Team leads and members can self-record weekly update videos summarizing progress, upcoming deadlines, and important announcements. This ensures all team members are informed, and provides updates without the need for synchronous meetings.
- **Training and Onboarding Modules:** Create a series of self-recorded training videos for new hires. These modules can cover company policies, tools, and processes, providing a consistent and comprehensive onboarding experience.
- **Cross-Departmental Knowledge Sharing:** Encourage team members to self-record tutorials and best practice sessions on specialized skills or tools. Sharing these videos across departments promotes a culture of learning.
- **Project Feedback:** Self-recording is useful for providing feedback on projects and proposals, allowing team members to communicate thoughts and suggestions clearly.
- **Presentations:** A self-recorded video on a short commonly given presentation on a concept, product, or team introduction can be both used internally and externally. With a self-recorded video presentation you can embed it in a longer presentation, share it asynchronously for others to view on their own time, and hone the material so it meets brand standards.