

Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs

**Prof.Sridhar Iyer
Prof.Sahana Murthy
Dr.Jayakrishnan M
Dr.Sameer Sahasrabudhe**

Indian Institute of Technology, IITB

Lecture 13

Do's and Don'ts – Part 1

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LeD or a learning dialogue promotes concept acquisition through learner interaction and we have seen that. What we will see now are some dos and don'ts to be followed while creating the learning dialogues or the LeDs. We have seen that video of the instructor that is the face video and the slides used by the instructors are two input modes available for the instructor while creating LeDs.

There are some more modes also which we'll discuss in detail in this LeD. These are the screen capture which is a video of the action happening on the screen and the handwriting where the instructor is writing on paper or a digital tablet or even a blackboard or a whiteboard and is being captured by some gadget, it could be a camera or a screen capture mechanism.

These four comprise of commonly used input modes. Let's try to discuss them in bit detail now, starting with the instructor video or the face video. The first and the foremost is the eye contact which establishes the connect. For example, when I am talking to you right now, I am looking directly into the center of the camera.

The moment I look somewhere here and keep talking to you, you will feel neglected or not connected. So definitely try to give this eye contact at least once in a while when you are speaking. The reason is that, even in a classroom it's not possible for the instructor to look at you individually all the time like the one learner in the classroom to be focused all the time. Therefore, it's okay to look occasionally at least once in a while towards the center of the camera to establish the connect.

The second and important suggestion is you can do retakes of the mistakes which have happened. Finally, the post-production team can edit it and keep the relevant takes in order to create the LeD. Another common question which I'm surfaced with is about the gestures and the movement on screen of the instructor. It's a personal choice at the end of the day.

However, it can add to some amount of personalization as well as connect when you use your natural gestures. Suggestion is that don't overdo it, at the same time don't restrict it to make it very rigid and

completely non-communicative at times. So, depending on your natural way of speaking I think you can improvise on that.

Out of all the other elements, audio becomes the most important element because although sometimes you may not be looking at the screen, the learners will definitely be hearing it. Therefore, give emphasis to clear audio by speaking slowly as well as using a good quality microphone for capturing the audio. It's important that you test it before you start recording and avoid all sorts of noises, scratches and disturbances while recording the LeD.

Voice modulation and the conversational style is also important because that is one way of establishing connect. Having a very monotone kind of a delivery without any fluctuation in your voices creates a boring effect on the learner and therefore, it should be avoided. In terms of the presentation part, since this video is recorded with a green screen, we can add any background to this video when we want to publish it. This is a critical decision because the choice of image at the backdrop will decide the clutter for the visual appeal of the entire LeD. For example, if the image is very noisy like this or completely bland like this, it can have different impact. Choose the image, so that it creates proper communication without distracting or disturbing the learner's attention. Slides are often created using a specific software.

Most of the softwares have very good templates available for creation of slides. Therefore, use them and also use the features such as, the alignment or the grid which is available to make them look clean and clear and readable for the learners. Use minimum fonts as much as you can because more fonts create a clutter. Similarly, avoid too smaller size of a font, for example, anything below 20 point would be non-readable for people, therefore, keep it at least 20 point and above for the content to be readable.

Follow the simple 6x6 rule which means that the slide will not have more than six bullets, at the same time every bullet will not have more than six words. This sounds very harsh, however, try to be around this rule in order to create your slides to make them more and more readable.

At this point here is a reflection spot. You have a six-minute video to be recorded and you are going very confidently in front of camera recording it. Towards the end of the LeD or the video, you commit some mistakes or a fumble or a wrong sentence that you have said.

The question is what will you do at that time? Please write down your answers about how will you solve this problem and whenever you are done resume. There are multiple ways in which we can address this, and many of them are correct because this problem of removing the unwanted can be addressed in various ways. The first one obviously is that you re-record that particular fumble or the mistaken sentence but remember at that time never start that sentence in between. For example, when am I, for example, when I did this fumble I should not start it from the mistaken world but I should start it from the beginning of the sentence or the slide itself to record that entire slide.

Therefore, the editors will get a very clear-cut video to replace the mistaken sentence. There is another option of editing it out and keeping the correct sentence but recording of the unit totally is a preferred solution because it will create a clean LeD video.