

Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs

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Lecture 14

Do's and Don'ts – Part 2

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At this point let us discuss another input mode which is screen capture. Software demonstrations which are happening on a particular computer or a website which is showing a certain text and interaction are possible to be captured using the screen capture software. There are many of them available which are free as well as paid and have various features. You can go through the list which is available in our Learning Extension Trajectories and choose the best according to your requirement.

Here are certain other guidelines for using the screen capture. Please synchronize your action and the speech whenever you are doing a particular action on screen, remember to speak about it simultaneously that will help the learners understand and follow whatever you are doing on screen.

Another common problem which is seen is cluttered screens while screen captures are happening. Many of us when we are using a screen capture forget that we have multiple windows open or multiple softwares running in the background. Therefore, when we do a Alt + Tab within the process, we can see all other unwanted processes which are completely unrelated information for the learners. Therefore remember to close all such applications and then start your screen capture as a fresh action so that the learners will have uncluttered and uncut view of whatever you are trying to show. Never miss the details, because nowadays these screen capture tools have a option of pointing out to the important places or the action points which you want to highlight.

Use these features to explain it more effectively. Writing by hand is another commonly used input mode for explaining concepts, processes and demonstrations also. Remember that this technique is very good for annotating. You can use your handwriting or your sketches in order to annotate in a customized fashion. You can also use them to build as you speak because you are able to write by hand and control the speed of this while doing so. However, while doing the handwriting video, remember the readability is the most prime thing. The learners are watching this on a device or a screen where there is a limitation of zooming it. Therefore, keep your handwriting size as big as possible to accommodate the content well. However, remember that it should be readable also at the same time.

Avoid making complex drawings because that will only confuse the learners. Whenever you have a detailed drawing, try to chunk it into multiple smaller drawings which are clean and big enough for learners to understand.

At this point here is another reflection spot. Try and recall input modes apart from the ones we have discussed so far and write them down. Once you are done, resume. There are many more input modes actually. Animations or simulations is one of them.

Animations are mainly used whenever we have objects or processes which cannot be shot by camera or which cannot be seen by naked eye. For example, separation of iron from the iron ore at a very high temperature is a phenomenon which cannot be otherwise shot by a camera, however, we can show that using animations. Another example could be how computer stores the data and how it processes the actions on it.

All these animations are again presented in a narrative format but whenever they are created in a interactive format they're called as simulations, where the learners can actually change the values and parameters to see the results. These can also be added into LeDs as a video where the instructor himself or herself changes these values and parameters and explains the phenomena using that. This could be changing the temperature or changing the velocity of a ball which is coming down or a object which is moving on the road or a gravity being changed for object in the air so such things can be actually explained using simulations.

Within videos also there are multiple choices available, for example, the one which I am doing right now is a studio recording where I am speaking in front of a camera but there could be situations where we have to go outdoor and shoot the real scenarios in outdoor locations. There could also be interviews where two people are talking to each other and that conversation itself is bringing out the content which is required. There also LeDs where classrooms are recorded as they are happening, where the instructor is discussing or lecturing, there is feedback captured real-time when the learners are speaking and all this becomes a LeD for the learners online.

As you can see, there are many modes available for capturing the content and you have to choose wisely for the content what you are trying to communicate. Finally, here are some recommendations for the post-production. Avoid jazzy or flashy editing patterns. Using of these bouncy text and some very flashy transitions with very bright colors have to be avoided. You can use simple cut and dissolve if you want to change from one scene to another.

However, avoid using textures and colors and patterns because it will only clutter the whole thing. Adding a small piece of instrumental music in the beginning will allow the learners to set up their audio systems. It could be headphones or a speaker but LeD starting directly can result in loss of certain content. Remember to provide appropriate credits for the content that you have used from elsewhere and also for the personnel who have helped you in doing this. Do not forget to take frequent backups of your content. This being very data intensive work it's quite likely that you may miss out on lot of work suddenly if you don't have backups.

Finally, remember that any high level of video production requires specialized personnel who are trained in creating these things. It's not possible to create such an advanced level video without the help of such a team. Therefore, invest in good quality instruments, equipment, and people if you want to do a high quality video creation job.