Introduction to Video Production

The Center for Teaching and Learning can help guide faculty through the process of producing video material for their hybrid courses.

Equipment:
The CTL can provide access to production equipment (compact cameras, tripods, and microphones) for faculty. Should faculty want to experiment with greenscreen techniques, there is a small greenscreen set-up located on the 6th Floor of the library, available for use with advance reservation, which the CTL can facilitate.

Software Programs and Platforms:
There are a number of platforms that can be used for video production and editing. Faculty members should decide which platform works best for them, depending on their available hardware, preferred operating system, and comfort level with the software. CTL can help direct faculty members to the appropriate solution.

OfficeMix is a free Powerpoint plug-in that can be used on Windows-based machines running Office 2013. OfficeMix integrates additional interactive functionality into shared PowerPoint presentations, including audio and video screencasts, quizzing, and slide annotations.
https://mix.office.com/watch/7o6kt118pguk

Camtasia is a program geared towards creating educational videos. It creates the ability to record video, audio, and everything else that might be happening on the user's computer screen; it also allows for the inclusion of other media and the addition of post-production effects, all of which can be integrated as elements into a final, single video.
https://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html

iMovie is a basic video editing software that works across all Mac platforms.
https://www.apple.com/mac/imovie/

Windows Movie Maker is a free basic video editing software for Windows Vista, Windows 7 or Windows 8.
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/get-movie-maker-download

BEST PRACTICES FOR VIDEO

Below are questions and suggestions to guide faculty through the process of conceptualizing, producing, and completing videos. The CTL is able to consult on each step of this process, including assisting with the production and post-production processes.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Planning and preparation is essential - Create a clear plan for the video and content that will be conveyed.
- Decide how organize the content.
  - Who is the audience?
  - What prior knowledge do they have?
  - What additional kinds of media will enhance explanations of the content? Still images? Virtual whiteboards? External video excerpts?
- Determine the ideal duration of the video.
  - Rather than one long video, consider creating a series of shorter videos on specific topics and breaking down content into chapters or segments.
- Draft a script for the video. This process helps faculty plan the delivery of content and serves as the basis for closed captions once the video is complete.
  - Read the script aloud to get a sense of how it sounds.

PRODUCTION

Filming
- Plan to film in a well-lit area. Avoid backlit situations, such as standing in front of a bright window, which could make it difficult to see the subject.
- Think intentionally about the background setting of the shot and what elements are seen in the composition. Is the background neat or are there distracting elements that should be moved out of the frame?
- Keep the camera as steady as possible: use a tripod or place the camera on a level surface to keep the shot from being shaky.
- Set up a nice composition for the shot. Rather than standing in the center of the frame, stand off to the left or to the right third of the frame to create a composition that is more balanced and pleasing to the eye.
- Create cue cards with key words and tape them just underneath the camera lens, to avoid constantly looking down at the script.

Audio
- Find a quiet location to film in, as background noise can be very distracting.
- Use a plug in microphone whenever possible. Or, if using a built in camera microphone, make sure the subject is standing close enough to get good audio levels.
- Test the audio by having the subject stand in the filming location and count to 10 in a normal speaking voice to make sure the levels are sufficient and the subject is audible.
- It is good practice to record 5-10 seconds of "room tone" before beginning the script. Each room and setting has its own background hum; recording room tone will be useful for filling in pauses when editing.

When Screencasting
- Clear off the desktop and close any unnecessary applications.
- Select a simple background for the desktop that will not be distracting to the viewer.

POST-PRODUCTION

Editing
- **Organization** - good organization is essential to good editing. Organize the video elements into separate folders, such as Audio, Video, Still Images, and Exports. Subfolders can be used to help further organize this material. For example, Audio can be divided into Narration, Interview, Music, etc., depending on what type of material is being organized. The key is to be able to locate the material quickly and easily.
- **The "timeline"** - Most editing platforms allow the user to lay out and edit the video in the form of a timeline. It is good editing practice to keep each of the elements on separate tracks (ex. video: lecture/webcam video, still images and other imported videos, or audio: voice over narration, other audio elements.)
- **"Jump cuts"** - Avoid abrupt edits between two similar shots as this can be jarring to the viewer. For example when cutting a lecture, cover the cut with another image. Alternatively, consider a video transition such as a fade if necessary.
- **Text on screen** - Read the text aloud very slowly to determine the duration it should remain on the screen.

Finishing
- **Audio** - If possible, clean up recorded audio to eliminate unnecessary "ands and ums." Add room tone in these places to help smooth out the audio.
- **Transitions** - Consider creating transitions in between specific slides or sections; however, be aware that too many transition effects can be distracting.
- **Closed captioning** - The video script serves as a great foundation for closed captions. Make any necessary updates or edits to the script to reflect what was actually recorded in the final video.
- **Exporting** - When exporting video, the necessary format and compression settings will vary depending on where you will be uploading the video (e.g., Youtube, vimeo, vocat). Adjust compression settings so the file size is as small as possible.