



Design for Learning

21st Century Online Teaching and Learning
Skills for Library Workers

design4learning.info

In Partnership With



Design for Learning 5 - Content Creation

Finally . . . Creating Content!
(Week 4 Lesson)



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Welcome to Week 4!

This lesson includes:

- Advance Organizer for Week 4 (video)
- Creating Content (video, with challenge question)
- Checklist before recording (list, with challenge question)
- Reflection (activity)
- Summing Up Week 4 (video)
- Additional Resources (list)

Advance Organizer for Week 4

Video Transcript:

“D4L Content Creation Week 4: Advance Organizer”

<https://youtu.be/hzdwRfVwW84>

Here we are in week 4 – we’ve been building up to this all month! You’ve evaluated existing sites based on best practices, you’ve started drafting some content, you’ve chosen some tools to try, and you’re finally ready to record and create your first piece of multimedia content for your own library community!

You may already have some experience with this, but it’s more likely that this is something that’s new to you. So give yourself a chance to experiment and don’t be so hard on yourself. Whether this is new or not, we hope you’ll share your own process and lessons learned in the discussion forum for this week.

As with last week, there isn’t as much in this lesson – just some thoughts to get you going, and then your time will be spent working on your own content.

Let’s get going!

Creating Content

Video Transcript:

“D4L Content Creation Week 4: Creating Content”

<https://youtu.be/BijtVF5Zxvk>

Slide 1

In your workbook for this week, we've shared a checklist of things to consider before you start recording your own multimedia content. Here's just a taste on this slide – but take a closer look in your workbook, and feel free to adapt this for yourself if there are other considerations for the particular content you're creating.

Let's go into a little more detail about some of this.

Slide 2

Up to now, we've discussed ways to improve the instructional quality of your content. You will also want your content to be of the highest possible technical quality. There are a number of fairly simple steps that you can take to increase quality from a technical perspective.

Audio quality can be improved by using a microphone. Relying on the built-in microphone on your laptop will result in more audible hiss, picking up clicks and typing or scrolling sounds. You don't have to spend hundreds of dollars - a headset with a microphone will do fine. If you have one to use with your phone, that is likely an improvement. You can also get a decent USB headset microphone for as little as \$30. To prevent "p" popping, position the microphone slightly away from your mouth. Try not to move too much or bump your desk as these sounds will be transmitted.

Slide 3

Find a quiet space to record. Eliminate as much room noise as possible by turning off fans or other devices that emit noise. Turn off the television in the background or any music playing. Warn your co-workers or family members to keep quiet. Choose a time to record that is likely to be more quiet.

Slide 4

For a more visually pleasing screencast, make sure that you eliminate all the clutter and isolated files on your desktop, and make certain that there are no sensitive or personal

documents visible. To keep things simple and running smoothly, you will want to close out all unnecessary applications running in the background, especially turning off pop-up notifications.

If you're recording with your webcam, on the other hand, think about how you can choose or improve your setting to make it more visually pleasing. Again, eliminate clutter in your background. Choose a space with good lighting and a simple background, or put up some kind of backdrop. If you wear glasses, it may take more time to arrange your lighting for less glare. In general, try to keep your own appearance as professional and friendly as possible.

Slide 5

You may not feel that you need to sound like a professional narrator, but you should at least want to improve your delivery for the sake of your learners. So many screencasts are dull and boring when a little attention to delivery could make all the difference. Here are a few considerations to keep in mind.

It's OK to make the occasional mistake. You're only human. The occasional stumble is acceptable. Too many and you should do a re-take.

One of the worst problems with narration, however, is sounding monotone. Before recording, practice varying your tone and adding inflection where appropriate. This makes the recording infinitely more listenable.

Also, project confidence through your voice and this will increase confidence in your students, as well.

Often, we do not realize how fast we talk. With online content, good pacing is essential. Speak clearly and practice talking slower than you think you should. However, long pauses should be avoided as the learner may think there is a technical problem on his or her end.

Have you ever listened to a screencast where the narrator seemed to go on and on . . . to the point of rambling? This is what happens when one lacks a concise and focused script or at least a bulleted outline. Stick to the script.

Keep your content as brief as you can and remember that chunking is an option if you have a lot to cover.

Lastly, put a smile in your voice by putting a smile on your face. Even if you are not recording in front of a camera you will discover that it makes a difference in your delivery. It makes you sound more confident, and helps with the varied tone.

Challenge Yourself

1. Which of the following is **NOT** recommended when you're recording content?
 - A. Make sure your microphone is not recording too much background noise.
 - B. If you are recording a screencast and showing your whole screen, tidy up what appears on your desktop and in your menubar.
 - C. Practice talking more slowly than you initially think you should, to make sure your learners can understand you.
 - D. Speak in a monotone voice to keep your voice consistent.

Checklist before Recording Multimedia Content or Presenting Online

This checklist is also in your workbook - but take a look here and think about which of these tips will apply to the content you're recording.

- Prepare script / storyboard
- Prepare slides or other resources
- Log in to all apps / sites / tools / services you will use
 - Have a single window open with all the sites you will use as different tabs, ready to go
- If sharing your full screen, make sure you're not displaying any unwanted information
 - Clear your desktop
 - Hide unwanted info on your menubar
- Avoid unwanted sounds or pop-up messages during your recording
 - Turn off notifications on your computer
 - Turn off the sound on your mobile phone / landline / or other devices
 - Warn co-workers / family members that you'll be recording
 - Put up a sign on your door
- If using your webcam, improve the view
 - Check your lighting - adjust lighting or position so you're not backlit (putting you in silhouette)
 - Check your background - if it's busy or distracting, change your position or put up a sheet or some other backdrop
 - Check yourself in a mirror
- Prepare your script like a teleprompter (if using webcam)

- Display your script on your screen in a large font near your webcam, so you're close to making eye contact with the camera while reading
- Hold your mouse out of the recorded frame so you can scroll through the text as you record
- Check settings in your recording tool
 - Test your audio
 - If you want to show your mouse movement and clicks, check that option (if available)
- Rehearse
 - Record a section, if not the entire video
 - Record a section without talking
 - Watch and note needed improvements, including looking for background noise during the part with no talking
 - Adjust
- Record!
 - Record 10 seconds without talking - this will give you "empty" air in case you need to add content in somewhere later (otherwise you'll hear an obvious break in the sound quality)
 - Consider recording in 2 steps (if you have software to mix them together after)
 - record just the visuals without talking
 - Then add your voiceover while the recorded visuals play, so you don't have to worry about mouse clicks
 - (or opposite order as it makes sense for you)

Challenge Yourself

2. Which of the following statements best represents the recommendations from D4L when it comes to recording content?

- A. Jump in and create your content off the cuff - your students will like your improvised informal content, and won't care if your recordings are consistent.
- B. Prepare, practice, and revise until you feel comfortable that you're providing the best possible quality content for your learners given your time and available resources.

Reflection

In our initial cohorts for Design for Learning, many learners found that the step to actually record some content was a huge hurdle.

Are you nervous about recording content?

If so, take some notes on the page for this reflection in your workbook, about what makes you nervous, and what questions and concerns you still have.

If not, take some notes about why not.

Either way, feel free to share your thoughts in the discussion forums. You may want to post to the D4L Community Forum in the Orientation Module, to reach more D4L participants (and alums) than those going through this module right now. Post your questions and concerns, or share your own tips and tricks.

Summing up Week 4

Video Transcript:

“D4L Content Creation Week 4: Summing Up”

<https://youtu.be/aIJ7SbT-yBo>

OK – let’s get you recording! Hopefully now you feel ready to give it a try! Don’t forget to use the checklist in your notebook as a reminder of important steps before you hit the “record” button.

Your final assignment for this module is to record up to 5 minutes of multimedia content using the tool(s) you've chosen in Week 3, and the material you drafted during Week 2. Then you’ll need to share it online using one of the services explored in Week 3. You should post the link in the discussion forum for this week, along with some thoughts about what was hardest or most fun about this process. As always, there are more details in your notebook. Try to have fun with it!

Additional Resources

For this week's instruction, you may find the following resources helpful.

Reading

- [Screencasting Basics An introduction to tools and tips for creating screencasts "on the fly"](#) - a LibGuide by Christine Tobias from the Michigan State University Libraries
- [Optimal Video Length for Student Engagement](#) by Candace Hazellet (2013)
- [A Practical Guide to Creating Learning Screencasts](#) by Clive Sheppard (2011)

Videos

- All of this module's videos are available on a playlist at YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw6HBD7UyT3mThGNgQ2s1r5a1tUhujmun>

Answer Key:

1. D - a monotone voice is NOT recommended when you're recording! A monotone voice makes it harder for your learners to understand what you're saying and focus their attention.
2. B - The D4L team has learned from experience that preparation, practice, and revision can make all the difference in quality online instructional content.