Educational Videos Best Practices: A Tip Sheet for Instructors of Post-Secondary Online and Blended Courses

The following guidelines summarize the main points made in the article “Considerations of Student Engagement and Cognitive Load: Educational Videos Best Practices” by Anita Parker (available at http://anatomyforfitnessleaders.weebly.com/educational-videos-best-practices.html). Refer to the article for a lengthier discussion and complete citations and references.

**Begin with learning objectives.** Well-constructed learning objectives will maximize time, effort, and organization of an educational video, as well as its place within a larger video series. They can provide a road map for production and help weed out interesting yet unnecessary information.

**Write and use a script.** Using a script, or at least a detailed point-form agenda, improves structure, clarity, accuracy, and professional quality of an educational video. It also helps ensure consistency within a video series. Unscripted videos may result in rambling and tangents, which can be a deterrent for student viewers. A script can also be used for captioning or as a downloadable resource, which supports various learning styles and situations of low bandwidth.

**Keep videos short.** Research shows that students simply will avoid watching videos that are longer than 6-10 minutes. Each video should focus on just one portion of content. A video series should be arranged in a logical sequence, such as progressing from simpler to more complex concepts. Also, shorter videos are easier to revise in the future.

**Maximize student engagement.** In the absence of a physical classroom space, educational videos must pique student interest and attention. Research-backed methods for maximizing student engagement include:

- Keeping the video short and focused.
- Aligning with course objectives.
- Connecting with real-life experiences.
- Incorporating active learning activities, such as interactive quizzes, games, and screen manipulations.
- Having interesting yet simple and uncluttered video graphics and overall design.
- Using an appropriate amount of text, symbols, and other strategies (e.g. zooming, color contrast) to direct the viewer’s attention to important information.
- Opting for a talking head whenever possible (as compared to narrated slides), speaking at a fairly quick pace with enthusiasm.