



from Melanie Strock

Melanie uses screencasts often. You can see them on her site: [HERE](#)

- 1.) **Keep videos short and to the point.** Several broken up one or two minute videos with project or homework steps are much better than one long video. Why? Students can move around freely in the assignment to where they need to look up and find instruction, are more likely to watch shorter videos, and even when placing in verbal cues such as “Please pause the video and do/try this step” students are unlikely to do so. So far, in my practice this year, the longer videos I’ve posted (unless they were lecture format) were unhelpful and even avoided by students. That being said, every classroom is different. Record various film lengths, test pilot, and gather student feedback to see what works for you.
- 2.) Lecture videos can be longer. **Use visuals.** such as Power Points, Smart Notebook, or Google Presentation slides in Screencast on screen. Also, if you’re planning on flipping your classroom, make sure students have something to do while watching lecture videos. Online video question tools like Blubbr can be used after you’ve uploaded the video to embed questions, or I also use note sheets with my 8th grade rock n’ roll lectures for students to complete. You don’t necessarily have to grade these things, but it is a good way to see if students completed watching the video.
- 3.) **Don’t be afraid to record yourself** because you’re not very well versed with editing tools. While you can certainly edit videos to improve their quality, this is something easier to do over time when you have some videos to actually edit. Consider this for a moment: we don’t get to edit our classroom teaching “live performances.” The best way to get started is by doing some.
- 4.) Screencast does a very good job in keeping visual quality for the most part with a consistent internet stream (for better performance, download the client instead of simply streaming it), but audio quality is something that is sensitive to your microphone set up. The number one reason why people will shut off and not listen to video is if the audio quality is poor or even painful to listen to. **Record in a quiet space with no background white noise (such as fans, vents, etc.) especially if using the microphone on your school laptop.** A worthwhile investment to aide with sound quality is a headset and microphone, and it doesn’t have to be an expensive one (but if you have a gamer in the family you can definitely borrow their’s for recording!). Inexpensive headsets run anywhere from \$15-\$20, and you may wish to look into USB ones due to the limited hookup bay on our school laptops (I also have an extra one if anyone just needs one to borrow).
- 5.) **Everyone hates the sound of their recorded voice.** I think it’s amusing that I’m a music teacher, yet I feel my recorded videos are very boringly monotone. **Over time, though, I’ve learned to let go of**

this insecurity to a degree to further progress in my classroom. That being said, good speaking techniques do aid in delivery. I say this, but Mindy can show you several examples of me making mistakes or saying “like...umm..” too many times. J Here is where you might consider editing eventually or rerecording, but in cases when that isn’t an option it isn’t the end of the world.

- 6.) **Uploading screencasts to YouTube is a great way to save website storage space and organize uploads.** You can create a channel with your Google Account log in and start uploading to it (set this up before creating your first films). Remember, if you don’t want films to be “public” at first, simply load them as “private” so they are hidden from view.
- 7.) Lastly, **I feel that having video tutorials has been a huge help in aiding with student absences from my classes. It is difficult with all of the differentiation we do to stop and catch up students who missed the instruction day of an assignment. Having video versions of lessons allows me to send it home as request homework, or simply be able to tell an absent student “Here is what we went over yesterday. Please watch it and let me know if you have questions.” I’ve also used it to help when I have new students move in mid-year. It’s nice to record a greeting, go over classroom procedures, and get them started in the class instead of a hurried greeting and shoving them into the rest of the class without going over anything.**

from Kristin

Kristin uses screencasts to teach and manage her classes. Her website: [HERE](#)

(Mindy paraphrasing...)

- K.I.S.S. -- and as short as possible
- Make sure it’s not a passive activity -- they must have something to “do” something WHILE it’s running; otherwise, they’ll treat it like another Youtube video. They must be able to interact with it somehow to see the meaning.
- Identify the objective BEFORE you begin (SLO’s or CCS) and include it somewhere in the video so they’ll understand it’s not just for entertainment.