Video Best Practices for Online Instruction: Lecture in Segments

Dr. Kerrie Douglas, Purdue University Assistant Professor of Engineering Education, shares best practices for faculty transferring their course materials online for the first time, primarily with the need to video their lecture. "Chunk it" says Douglas. In other words, break up your lecture into 10-minute segments to allow online interaction and to assess student knowledge along the way.

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Often when I talk to instructors about best practices from the research on creating videos, one of the first things that they say is, "With my content, it's very to reduce it down to something more bite-sized." A 10-minute video or a lecture seems really difficult when they're used to lecturing for 50 minutes straight. Well, my response back is to one, find where the natural breaks in the content are, and just create chunks.

Researchers have been finding for 30-40 years that you can only remember and retain a certain time span of information. And learners are most likely to remember the first few things you say and then the last few things that you say. There's a huge dip in between. And if we can shorten those timeframes, then we're going to increase the amount of retention that the students have from the material that was covered.

So it doesn't even have to be, "Well I'm gonna talk everything about my area, just super-duper fast." We don't want that to be the case. Instead, “chunk it” down to something that is able to be discussed in 10 minutes or less, and then pose a question. Or have the learners go and do something before they go and watch the next one. That way, they stay engaged, and they're accountable to actually watching the video, as opposed to just skipping around to what they think is most important.

One approach is to create videos that are just “chunk 10 minutes or less” with content and then to develop two to three questions that really prompt learners to take notes on the thing that you were hoping that they would get out of that. So rather than just expecting them to just write notes the whole time, that you actually pose questions that they have to be able to answer, and the only way they can answer those questions is if they watched that video.
The only time it really would take *additional* time for the faculty member is to think about where the natural breaks are in that lecture they were planning on giving and then pose a couple questions for the learners to almost state back something that they were told.