

Video performance takeaways

- Focus on the three “C”s: Be Comfortable, Confident and Conversational.
- Relax. Have a one-on-one conversation with the camera. Look straight into it and make eye contact. Blink normally. Just be yourself and let your personality show through.
- Smile, not just with your mouth but with your eyes. You are happy to be here teaching!
- Don’t look down or away at your notes. Put those notes – preferably just bullet points – on the teleprompter. That’s what it’s for! Any Word document will do, and all uppercase Arial or Helvetica is easiest to read on the prompter.
- If you have an itch while on camera, scratch it. Brush your hair out of your eyes, if it’s bothering you. Just get it over with and it will seem natural to the viewer.
- Gesture. You can’t move around much, so it’s fine to talk with your hands. Keep it interesting with hand, eye and facial movements. (It will help keep you from nervous fidgeting, too.)
- Voice: I tend to raise my tone when I’m excited or nervous. It makes me sound really nasal, so I try to start LOW. If I start that way, I’ll usually stay that way.
- Be entertaining. Modulate your voice – no droning.
- Don’t talk too fast, or too slow, but if you must do one or the other, slower is better.
- Before the session: Plan carefully. Make many short lessons, 5-12 minutes. Shorter is better.
- If you wear glasses, consider getting a non-glare coating. It’s pricey, but it really works.
- Dress can be as creative as you are. It doesn’t have to be boring, (but it must not be green!) Patterns are risky, too.
- Put yourself in a good mood.
- Arrive early for your session so you’re not harried, nervous or sweaty.
- Bring a little grooming kit with a mirror, a comb, a hand towel and maybe a razor if you are inclined toward a 5 o’clock shadow. Add a pack of “blotting sheets” to help rid your face of “shine.” I use Deep Clean by Neutrogena. Any drug store will have them.
- Bring something to drink. You will need to wet your whistle now and then.
- Afterward: Watch your videos soon. It may be painful but look closely for nervous habits or distractions. For example, do you begin every sentence with “So” or end them all with “right?” Do you play with your wedding ring? Ask your family to watch and critique. You will get better with practice and observation.

PowerPoint Tips

- The PPTs you made for a lecture hall usually don’t work well for online.
- In this case, you are “in the PowerPoint.” You have to make room to stand somewhere, usually to one side or the other.
- PPTs for online should be in widescreen format, 16x9 to be exact because that’s the format of the video itself. (You can set this in PowerPoint via File/Page Setup/On-Screen show: 16x9/ but WAIT: If you do that on PPT13 for Mac, it will stretch the content of your existing slides to widen them. They’ll look terrible and you will have to resize every image on every slide. PowerPoint 2015 offers a “Scale” option, and that will place your 4x6 slide in the center of a 16x9 canvas. From there, it’s easy to move content to one side and provide yourself a place to stand. Windows PPT offers the scale option as well.)
- Use a high-contrast but attractive color scheme. Say “no” to crazy fonts that are hard to read.
- Keep the amount of text to a minimum – bullet points only – and no small type
- Interesting graphics and photos make more attractive slides and more engaged students.
- Create a “theme” slide to use as an opening/closing background image.

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