High-Quality Video Setup (Video Essentials)

Introduction 0:00

Welcome to eSAIL's Instructor Series: Video Essentials.

In this tutorial, you will learn simple techniques to improve the look of your lecture videos: workspace setup, lighting sources, web camera placement, and finally, quality audio.

Workspace Setup 0:18

Your workspace is your own personal classroom, so consider designing it to be both functional and expressing your personality.

The first thing is soundproofing. Dedicate a private room, keeping pets and family as far away as possible during sessions. He's ok.

If possible, switch your cellphone to vibrate, or even better, airplane mode.

Second is Wi-Fi reception. Make sure you get a strong signal. If not, consider getting a range extender to boost its performance.

Always unplug your Wi-Fi to reboot it before each session to ensure the best connectivity. Students will thank you.

Third, think about a backdrop with detail, such as a bookshelf. Avoid a blank wall or ceiling fan.

Depth is important, so make it at least five to ten feet behind your desk to avoid distraction.

Lighting Sources 1:20

The goal is to evenly light your face. The most inexpensive light you can find is sunlight.

There are a couple of rules about natural light.

A window behind you is not ideal. Neither is having it from the side.

For best results, place your desk directly facing the window.

The alternative is placing a light behind and above your laptop.

We recommend using a ring light with adjustable brightness for a variety of skin tones.

If evening, add as much light as possible to brighten your background.

It should look more like this…

…and less like this.

Web Camera Placement 2:04

Make sure your web camera is placed at the same height as your eye line while in your seated position.

For laptops, that means at least 12 inches above the desktop. Try stacking books underneath it to raise it to a proper height.

Then fine-tune the view by tilting the web camera position.

Too close.

Too high.

Too low.

The correct position shows viewers your chest at the bottom of the screen and your head just below the top.

Quality Audio 2:37

One of the most significant improvements to learning comprehension is adding a microphone.

The built-in laptop microphone has a hallway intercom quality not meant for long communications.

While headset microphones are a good alternative, its call center appearance communicates a less personable rapport with students.

The best professional option is a USB lavalier microphone.

It clips onto your shirt just below the second button of your shirt.

Once the USB plug is inserted, just select the new microphone device under the Windows sound settings.

That's it! Now enjoy the clarity of your new voice.

To make your lectures flow better verbally, you may want to consider using a teleprompter.

A free online service lets you paste text using simple, user-friendly controls.

By shrinking down the browser window directly underneath the webcam, you will create a delivery that will make you look and sound more natural.

For more detailed instruction ideas and product recommendations, please visit our faculty service resource at LearnTech.engr.tamu.edu.