

4 Considerations for Offering Recorded Lectures

While recorded lectures are not a new technology, they have become increasingly common and popular during the pandemic. Though some benefits of recorded lectures are apparent (e.g., helpful for students who are sick), it might not always be clear to instructors what benefit these recordings serve, or their impact on student attendance, motivation, and learning. This resource offers considerations and suggestions for navigating recordings in our evolving educational landscape. This resource is a first step in approaching this complex question, and we invite feedback and recommendations!

1. (Re)establish expectations and norms

Some instructors have communicated that recordings may be impacting student attendance in class. At this point in the semester, it will be difficult to adjust expectations and norms within a class, but communicating to students the value of in-class participation (to learning, engagement, etc.) early on can be very helpful in promoting attendance and engagement. This can begin as early as day one: rather than going over the syllabus on the first day of class, consider modeling what a class will look like, including common activities or engagement, and why coming to class (when possible) is important for learning. If you're trying to re-establish expectations and norms later in the semester, you might consider experimenting with active learning strategy or practice within a single lecture and communicating the value of participating to students.

2. Consider accessibility

When determining whether offering recordings is appropriate for your course, consider the needs of students with disabilities and the built environment of the classroom. Since every classroom is different, and there may be concealed or hard to identify obstacles to accessibility, consider asking students about any challenges they may have getting to and sitting in your classroom.

3. Consult the research

In studies on the use and effectiveness of recorded lectures on student participation and learning, students indicate watching recorded lectures for a variety of reasons: making up content from absences; studying for exams; and, most commonly, reviewing material they may have found confusing from the lecture. In a large 2016 study, use of lecture recordings was correlated with improved exam performance, but the relationship, though significant, was very small (Williams et al). This and other findings suggest that watching recorded lectures is most effective when done as a supplement to instruction throughout the entire semester, as opposed to watching recordings only prior to exams. When it comes to studying for exams or using recordings as a review tool, instructors can encourage students to view lecture recordings as a first step for studying, and to supplement recordings with other effective strategies (problem posing, group studying, etc.).

4. Ask students why they use recordings

While existing research does offer some insight into student behavior and the learning benefits of recordings, we need more data after two+ years of online, hybrid, and HyFlex learning. Consider polling your students anonymously to ask why they use recorded lectures, and reviewing the data as a group. This is an opportunity to share strategies for studying with recordings or communicate why coming to class in general or for specific sessions is important (e.g., to participate in activities, get to know team members or the instructor).

Interested in a consultation or
hearing a student perspective on
lecture recordings or HyFlex offerings?
Contact pedagogy@barnard.edu.