

## Tech Snacks: Brightspace Video Note Tool

The Video Note Tool is a convenient feature that allows students and instructors to record and embed videos directly in Brightspace for announcements, content, discussions, assignments, feedback, and more. Brightspace provides auto-captioning for all videos recorded directly through the Video Note tool.

### How can I use Video Notes?

Video Notes can be created anywhere a text editor exists in Brightspace by clicking on the “Insert Stuff” button →



Instructors can use Video Notes to create announcements, record video lectures, publish assignment feedback, and provide video instructions – in both the Activities tab (Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes) and within the Content modules.

Students have the ability to record Video Notes within the Discussion tool rather than drafting a written response to the discussion prompt. Students and instructors have the ability to post initial posts and replies using Video Notes in the Discussion tool.

### Pros and cons of the Video Note tool

#### Pros:

- The tool is easy to use
- Brightspace generates captions for Video Notes (accessibility); these can be created directly in the Video Note or videos can be uploaded to the Video Note
- Students are able to connect visually in an online community
- It enables holistic communication (body language, tones, inflections, voice)
- It provides instructors with better context clues for the students' well-being
- It provides a more authentic assessment of student comprehension and confidence with the content
- Students have the opportunity to gain confidence talking about the content
- Students can be given the choice to submit an assignment or discussion in writing OR verbally through video (differentiated learning)

#### Cons:

- It is more likely to encounter problems on mobile devices (cell phones, tablets)
- It can be glitchy in browsers other than Chrome or Firefox (i.e., Safari, Edge)
- Brightspace does not offer a screen-share option when recording Video Notes
- Users cannot pause while recording; the recording is one continuous stream

### Tips and tricks

- Include a syllabus statement about requirements for a webcam or video capability
- Consider creating a “How-To” document for students explaining Video Notes and what they will need in preparation
- Provide students a “practice lesson” where they can practice recording/uploading a Video Note without the pressure of content-specific assignments
- Remind students: best web browsers to use are Google Chrome and Firefox
- Remind students: the best devices to use are laptops, desktops, and Chromebooks
- Talk with students about their preparation process: outlines, talking points, scripting
- Provide and explain clear expectations (for both the videos and the content)
- Consider setting a time parameter

- Require the initial post to be due first, then give students the rest of the week to post replies to each other

## Student Feedback

It is expected and normal for students to be resistant to using Video Notes at first. However, Dr. Amy Smith conducted a student experience survey and found evidence that students prefer creating Video Notes (rather than written posts) for online discussions. Some of the feedback is below:

*“They are much more real than written discussion.”*

*“I like it because it helps the person be more natural in their discussion and add things on the spot.”*

*“It allows one to get a better understanding of their classmates and helps eliminate any misunderstandings.”*

*“I think it is more like an organic conversation between classmates.”*

*“I don’t like how I always mess up and re-record, but that’s not a requirement, just my own issue.”*

*“I am shy, so I find it hard to start, but I do just fine when I do.”*

*“I feel like I can portray more emotion to my peers by speaking with emotion that is hard to convey through text.”*

*“Vocalizing content helps me grasp it better.”*

*“At first, I was typing out everything I wanted to say but eventually I got more comfortable speaking from my quick notes.”*

*“I despise doing online discussions, but video notes make me despise it a little less.”*

When surveyed “I wish more professors used Video Notes for online discussions,” 11 of 16 students replied: 8 agree, 2 neutral, 1 disagree.

## Faculty insights, lessons learned, and things to think about

- Students are tech savvy; they need minimal instruction and support
- Tech issues have been quick to resolve
- Define a purpose for Video Notes (content vs. connections)
- Expect resistance at first; who likes to see themselves live on a screen?!
- Discuss with students how they prepare to create Video Note:
  - Outlines, scripts, reviewing discussion prompts
  - Students report wanting to submit an accompanying outline with submitted Video Notes
- Allow for deviations in Video Note format
  - Individual notes vs. “interviews”
- Set expectations or norms for Video Notes (minimize distractions, talk clearly, add captions, etc.)
- Reach out to OTLE