

Document Camera Tips

Gena Burke - 2022-08-10 - Comments (0) - Digital Whiteboarding

A document camera can be thought of as the 21st century version of the overhead projector. It is a camera-- usually with a built-in LED light-- that records images or video of items that you place underneath it. You can plug the document camera straight into your PC, Mac, or Chromebook and livestream a demonstration or annotation to your students.

Top Tips for Document Cameras:

- If you have a small white board or transparency paper with dry erase markers, it may be easier and more eco-friendly to quickly erase your writing rather than having to keep swapping out paper.
- Make sure that you have plenty of space on the side of your laptop that you plan on placing the document camera.
- Place the document camera on the side of your laptop or desktop that also aligns with the writing hand you will be using (i.e. - If you are right-handed when writing, place the document camera to the right of your laptop/desktop).
- For easier readability on a white surface, use a dark marker (e.g. Sharpie, if using paper).
- Keep a stack of paper (more than you think you will use) next to you, but out of frame.
- Place duct/masking/gaffer's tape on your table to mark the edges of your paper/whiteboard. That way if you accidentally move your paper/whiteboard, you can easily reposition it. This will ensure that what you write/draw will stay within the area visible to the document camera and therefore the students as well.
- Place a small piece of tape on the table to reuse with each piece of paper you put down. This will help from needing another hand to stabilize the paper and therefore add another obstacle to obstruct the students' view.
- After writing something, make sure to remove your hand from the paper so you are not blocking what you have just written out.
- You may need to use a desk lamp to brighten up the writing area.
- In addition to drawing on blank paper, you can also use the document camera for

reviewing passages of text or any other physical object.

For use with Zoom:

1. Plug into USB port (If you have a newer Mac, you will need a USB to USB-C adapter))
2. Start Zoom session
3. Click "Share" and go to "Advanced"
4. Choose "Use a Second Camera"
5. Camera will automatically work and the host will be able to switch between webcam and document camera via the little "Switch Camera" button in the upper left-hand corner of the video feed that's currently active

Don't have a document camera? Watch our brief video below on how to create your own for Zoom using a smartphone.