Learning Video Format Chooser

Pick the format first, from the learning job. Delivery, tracking, and cost all follow from this one choice.

1. Recorded lecture

Use it when:	You need to reach many learners and keep a reusable reference. The cheapest format to run.
Cost:	Very low per learner: encode once, serve via CDN (~$0.05/GB egress).
Tracking:	SCORM or xAPI: started, progress, completed. Define what 'complete' requires.

2. Microlearning

Use it when:	You want completion. Cut content into 2-6 minute single-idea units finished in one sitting.
Cost:	Very low: same VOD delivery as a lecture, just shorter files.
Tracking:	xAPI per unit: a clean trail of which micro-units each learner finished.

3. Interactive video

Use it when:	You need skills practice: in-player quizzes, hotspots, or branching choose-your-path lessons.
Cost:	Low delivery, but production multiplies: branches mean many clips plus routing logic.
Tracking:	xAPI Video Profile: each answer, branch, and hotspot click as its own statement.

4. Live virtual classroom

Use it when:	You need real-time interaction, live Q&A, and discussion happening now over WebRTC.
Cost:	High: billed per participant-minute (~$0.004/min); paid again every session.
Tracking:	xAPI events: attended, asked a question, answered a poll. No 'resume' (it is live).

5. Cohort-based course

Use it when:	You want the highest finish rate: a group moves through a schedule together, with peers.
Cost:	Highest: a program-management system with video, scheduling, and groups inside it.
Tracking:	xAPI across all components, plus enrollment, schedule, and discussion state.

Rule of thumb

Cheap + easy to track -> recorded or microlearning.
Real-time or social accountability -> live or cohort, and budget for it.

Companion to: 'Learning Video Formats: Lecture, Microlearning, Interactive, Live Class, Cohort'
www.forasoft.com/learn/elearning-video/articles-elearning/learning-video-formats



GO DEEPER · THE 7-VOLUME HANDBOOK

Fora Soft Video Engineering Handbook

Seven volumes, 9,000+ pages: encoding, streaming, audio and AI for video products — from the pixel to production.

By Nikolay Sapunov, CEO at Fora Soft · Kindle & paperback on Amazon

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This chooser matches lecture, microlearning, interactive, live and cohort formats to cost and tracking. Our seven-volume handbook covers the video stack under every format; start with Volume 3 for CDNs, players and WebRTC, then Volume 1 for encoding and Volume 4 for audio and captions.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE

- CDN delivery, players and WebRTC classes (Vol. 3)
- Audio and captions for lessons (Vol. 4)
- Encoding cost per format (Vol. 1)

THE FULL HANDBOOK · 7 VOLUMES · 9,000+ PAGES · ALL ON AMAZON

Vol. 1 · Video Encoding — pixels and color to H.264, HEVC, AV1, quality metrics and AI

Vol. 2 · Video Streaming I — network transport, contribution and ingest, HLS, MPEG-DASH, CMAF

Vol. 3 · Video Streaming II — ABR, CDNs, players, WebRTC, DRM and the economics of delivery

Vol. 4 · Audio for Video I — PCM, codecs, loudness, accessibility, real-time voice processing

Vol. 5 · Audio for Video II — jitter buffers, lip sync, Atmos, quality metrics, neural codecs

Vol. 6 · AI for Video I — models and inference, computer vision, speech, search, generative video

Vol. 7 · AI for Video II — real-time pipelines, agents, serving, cost, compliance, verticals

Picking the right video format before you build the course?

We will estimate delivery, production and tracking cost per format for your audience and recommend the mix. 250+ video products shipped since 2005.

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