



VISTA HIGHER LEARNING

How do I personalize my teaching in an online course?

When students learn online, it helps to keep those students engaged, alert, and on task when you personalize the learning activities with video, audio, and communications / monitoring.

1. **Live Chat:** This messaging tool allows you to chat (text, audio/video) directly with your students.
 - a. Make yourself available to chat when it is convenient for you.
 - b. Online office hours
 - i. Have a set time of when you will be online to answer questions
2. **Instructor Notes:** In the online study environment, students will be most successful if they can feel your presence throughout the course.
 - a. Add your own voice to the activities that your students complete online via Instructor Notes.
 - i. Provide additional instruction
 - ii. Give a tip on a particular question
 - iii. Give a specific reminder about a grammar topic
 - iv. Add a model
 - v. Words of encouragement!
3. **Monitoring and “Check-ins”:** Monitor students’ online work and provide regular feedback
 - a. Assign instructor-graded activities and provide personalized feedback
 - b. Send “just checking in” emails or messages throughout the semester
 - c. Utilize “Announcements” in your Communication tool
4. **Instructor-Created Content:** Further personalize your course and meet the needs of your students by creating an activity that specifically relates to a lesson theme, cultural topic, reading, or communicative activity.
 - a. Student audio recordings and written compositions
 - i. Students respond individually with an open-ended oral or written response. These activities can be enriched by adding text, photo/image or audio references. Here are activity ideas:
 1. Leave a voicemail/note for a specific purpose
 2. Submit a review of a cultural reading
 3. Descriptions of images
 4. Oral assessments
 5. Assign a weekly dialogue journal in which students communicate with you about different cultural or language topics.
 6. Have students reflect on what they’ve learned at the end of a lesson
 - b. Partner Chats – create partner chats that you can complete with students
 - c. Video
 - i. Upload a YouTube video of yourself and assign another activity for students to compare, review, comment.
5. **Forums:** Enable students to leave audio and text in threaded discussions. Students can review peer responses and replies. For example:
 - a. Describe your family. Try to talk for about 1 minute.
 - b. Listen to the responses of three of your classmates, and reply to their descriptions with a 30-second comparison of your family to theirs.

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