

Going beyond the minimum for your online course

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Now that you have set up the basic structure of your course for online teaching, it is time to think about adding media and taking advantage of the online environment and tools to engage your students. My best advice is to review the helpful tips on blackboard itself, check under their recent note: "Just in Time - Mid-Semester for ideas on almost all of the media and tools you can use." As that can take some time, below are a few tips on what to choose and how to configure the various features.

- 1) Creating an online test
 - a) This is a time-consuming project and worthwhile **IF** you are going to use it often or realize that we are in shut down for this year's spring finals.
 - b) There should be some instructions on how to add or create online tests.
- 2) Utilizing third party videos including YouTube in your course content
 - a) Link to them via a PowerPoint as part of your 'lecture' or create a folder on each 'lecture' for your resources and direct your students there in your 'lecture'. Including these in your online classroom is as easy as inserting the link to them.
 - b) You should include the name of the resource and a short blurb about what you want them to watch for.
- 3) Hosting Lectures Online Taking your already prepared material 'live': There are a few entry ways to include your own video.
 - a) If you would like to host classes during your regularly scheduled time, please visit: <https://itl.gwu.edu/communicate-students>.
 - b) Here you can find information about virtual office hours, and more information about hosting online class sessions
 - c) In addition to explaining how to conduct a synchronous session, where you can all be active at the same time, the link also points to how to use email, office hours ideas, chats, etc.
 - i) From my experience, this can be fun, but it really needs forethought to make it effective. Leave the 'lecturing' to your material and go active learning. Think about checking the roster to see who is online, using questions, remember waiting for response, demonstrations, create subgroups and have them work together for a bit on a problem. You probably do not 'lecture' straight for the full class time and so don't plan to here. Remember that being online is not only tiring but students are easily distracted, so keep it fresh.
 - ii) Here is a link to a series of videos created for a DOD grant to present pedagogy ideas to cybersecurity experts who have no teaching experience. Each video contains some introduction to the community college environment, so you can skip that and just review some active learning ideas and tools. <https://blogs.gwu.edu/seas-reachtoteach/>
 - iii) Check the videos above for the use of "Annoto" <https://www.annoto.net>. You can use this tool with videos to permit viewers to enter comments in real-time. All viewers can see them and respond. It keeps a record, so you can use the questions and comments for a quiz, test or just follow up.
 - d) If you have already created lectures that provide a board overview of the topic and would like to add verbal content, you can use the narrate feature in PowerPoint to create a narrated PowerPoint. Then you can upload the narrated slides to the content folder for your class

- e) If you really want your image along with the narration, there are tools for doing this from the Center for Teaching and Learning. It's a nice feature as you appear while the slides are playing in the background.
 - f) Creating a zoom lecture
 - i) this might be an easy alternative to the tools from the Teaching and Learning Center. You could launch zoom, turn on record, give your lecture speaking while sharing your screen and even ask questions that you want students to respond to in the discussion section. The free version of Zoom only stays open for an hour, so you might have to make short bursts, but ideally you should not lecture constantly for an hour!
- 4) We are not alone in this endeavor: Other schools and universities have some easy guides. I like this high-level introduction from Northern Illinois University. <https://www.niu.edu/blackboard/resources/communicatetips.shtml>. Note, you will not need the section on the stunners introducing themselves, unless you have ghost students until now!