Enhancing Your Online Teaching to Meet the New Federal Rule

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September 24, 2021

Objectives

- Increase awareness about the New Federal Distance Education Rule
- Apply strategies that makes an online course effective
- Learn about tools and accessibility
- Identify help resources

Part I
New Federal Distance Education Rule

New Federal Distance Education Rule

- Effective July 1, 2021
- Requires all online courses and programs include '*regular and substantive interaction (RSI)*'
- Applies to synchronous and asynchronous courses, with primary focus on asynchronous courses

ED Statement & RSI Activities

Two of the following activities totaling at least 50-60 minutes every week for a 3 credit-hour course in a long fall/spring semester, or a scaled number of minutes for a course with a different number of credit-hours and a shorter or longer semester

- Synchronous lecture, recitation or similar activity
- Submitting an assignment (*includes feedback)*
- Taking an exam (*includes feedback)*
- Participating in an *interactive* tutorial, webinar, or similar activity
- Participating in a group project or an online discussion activity
- Interacting with an instructor about academic matters

What is Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)?

- Initiated by the instructor
- Regular, scheduled and predictable
- Relevant to the course content
- Engage students in substantive interaction

Instructor Responsibilities

Include at least *two* of the following methods:

- Direct instruction
  - discussion participation, instructor feedback, synchronous lectures
- Provide information, respond to questions
- Coursework assessment and feedback
- Facilitate group discussion
- Other instructional methods approved by accreditor

Examples of RSI

Instructor Initiated

- ✓Synchronous lecture
- ✓Instructor-facilitated discussions
- ✓Frequent and timely feedback

Scheduled & Predictable

- ✓Weekly summaries or highlights of discussion posts
- ✓Regularly scheduled online reviews or help sessions
- ✓Scheduled virtual office hours

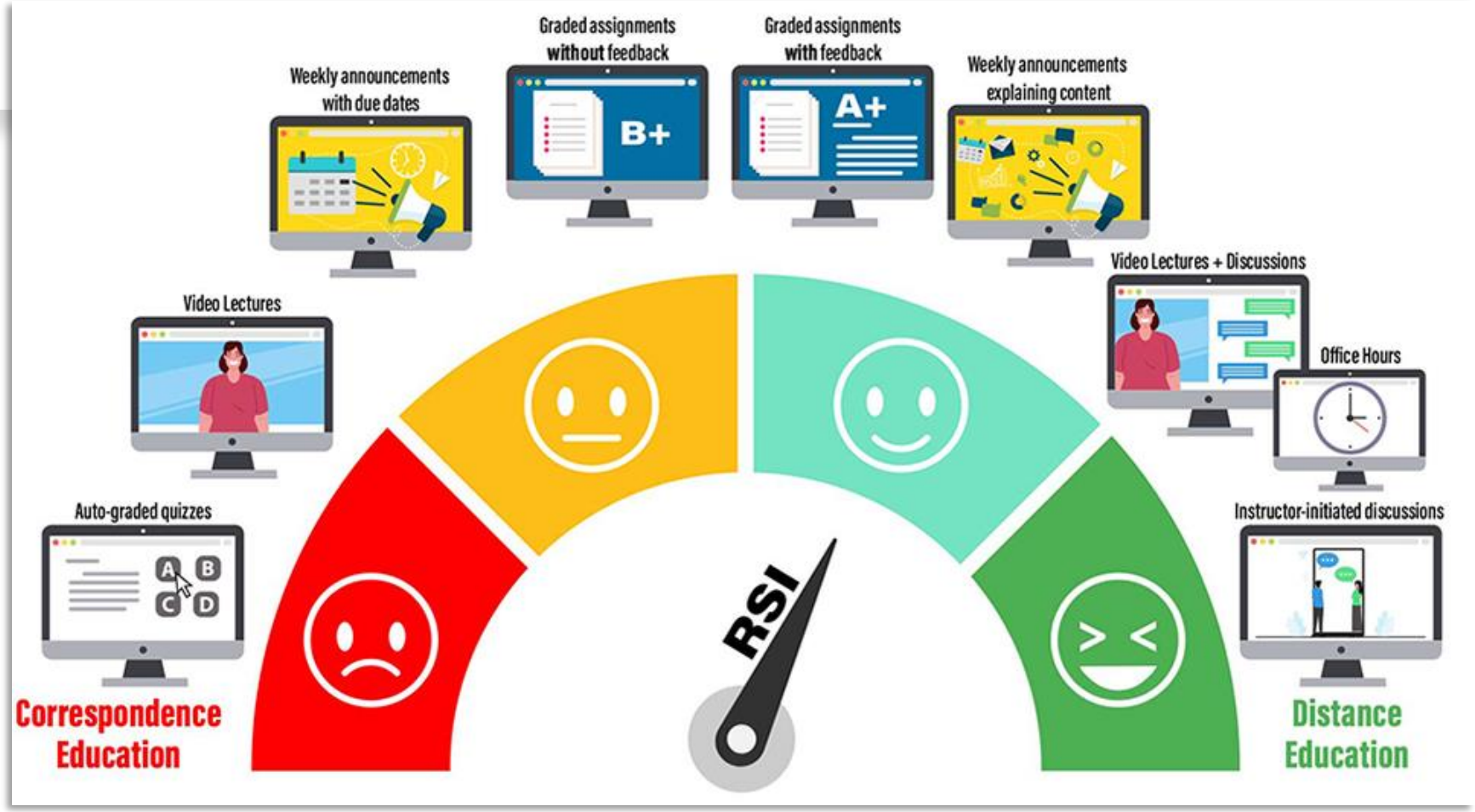
Substantive Interactions

- ✓Study guides for scaffolding learning
- ✓Personalized feedback on assignments
- ✓Monitoring and guiding student-to-student interactions

What does *not* constitute RSI?

- Welcome messages, announcements
- Pre-recorded lectures, non-interactive webinar
- Open-ended, unmoderated discussion forum
- Assignments that do not require reviewing and interaction
- Automatically graded tests
- Student-solicited office hours
- Optional review sessions
- Reminding students of course attendance policy
- Adding numeric grades to the gradebook

Regular and Substantive Interaction Index



Source: SUNY Empire College Website

RSI Activities In Your Class

MS Form Link: https://forms.office.com/r/ngczyMnU0P

Survey Results:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=voLF_CikEytSw6PDwxCWccK4uuRb-dBpSboz6_fgXxUQTlFUEpKSkkyVFIwNkE5V0lFOUlIQTFPWS4u&AnalyzerToken=4M1dPlv4D2aoaNaq00WEWb7qEWJAMv73

Part II
Strategies for Making Courses Effective

Online Course Format: Synchronous vs Asynchronous

Online synchronous— a course where students and instructor are required to meet at a scheduled time via a web conferencing tool such as Microsoft TEAMS or Zoom.

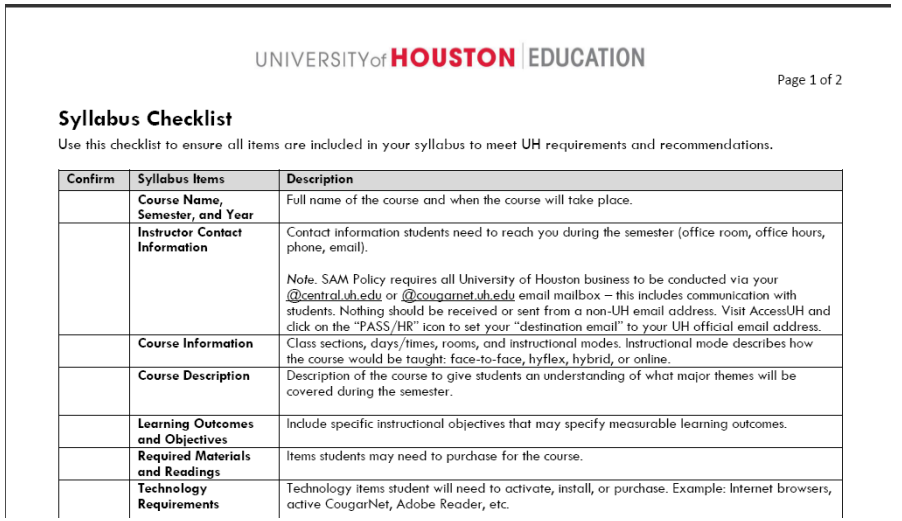
Online asynchronous—a course where students and instructors have variable schedules and have limited meetings.

Course Design

- Include course overview and instructor information
- Determine the content flow and engagement (*think content and activities*)
  - Identify synchronous and asynchronous components
- Use modular approach
- Keep modules consistent and organized
- Pay attention to visual design and layout
- Ensure accessibility
- Choose appropriate tools and technology

Syllabus

- Contract between instructors and students
- Clearly defines expectations for students
- Dates for synchronous meetings clearly identified
- Deadlines for assignments and assessments clearly outlined
- Accessibility Resources clearly identified



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Syllabus Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure all items are included in your syllabus to meet UH requirements and recommendations.

Confirm	Syllabus Items	Description
	Course Name, Semester, and Year	Full name of the course and when the course will take place.
	Instructor Contact Information	Contact information students need to reach you during the semester (office room, office hours, phone, email). *Note.* SAM Policy requires all University of Houston business to be conducted via your @central.uh.edu or @cougarnet.uh.edu email mailbox – this includes communication with students. Nothing should be received or sent from a non-UH email address. Visit AccessUH and click on the "PASS/HR" icon to set your "destination email" to your UH official email address.
	Course Information	Class sections, days/times, rooms, and instructional modes. Instructional mode describes how the course would be taught: face-to-face, hyflex, hybrid, or online.
	Course Description	Description of the course to give students an understanding of what major themes will be covered during the semester.
	Learning Outcomes and Objectives	Include specific instructional objectives that may specify measurable learning outcomes.
	Required Materials and Readings	Items students may need to purchase for the course.
	Technology Requirements	Technology items student will need to activate, install, or purchase. Example: Internet browsers, active CougarNet, Adobe Reader, etc.

Engagement & Interaction

Set expectations and model engagement

- Reach out before start of the class (*make course available early*)
- Post expectations and course policies
- Provide content in multiple formats

Build Engagement and Motivation

- Provide short introduction to each module
- Provide clear guidance for completing activities and for gaining deeper understanding of the course content
- Encourage students to ask questions and share reflections
- Support students' ability to explore and create

Engagement & Interaction

- Integrate active learning (*flipped model*, *problem-based, project-based learning*)
- Foster collaboration and sense of community
- Assess early and often
- Timely, frequent feedback

Interaction Examples

Instructor to Students

- ✓ Lectures/TA/Lab sessions
- ✓ Q&A sessions
- ✓ Announcements
- ✓ Course email/message
- ✓ Assignments/assessments

Student to Student

- ✓ Collaborative projects
- ✓ Peer review
- ✓ Group presentations
- ✓ Group discussions

Assessment and Feedback

- Create assessments tied to course goals and objectives
- Add essay or short answer questions to Multiple Choice exams
- Include multiple types of assessments
- Convey your expectations about student work *(Include Rubrics)*
- Provide timely and substantive feedback

Student Feedback

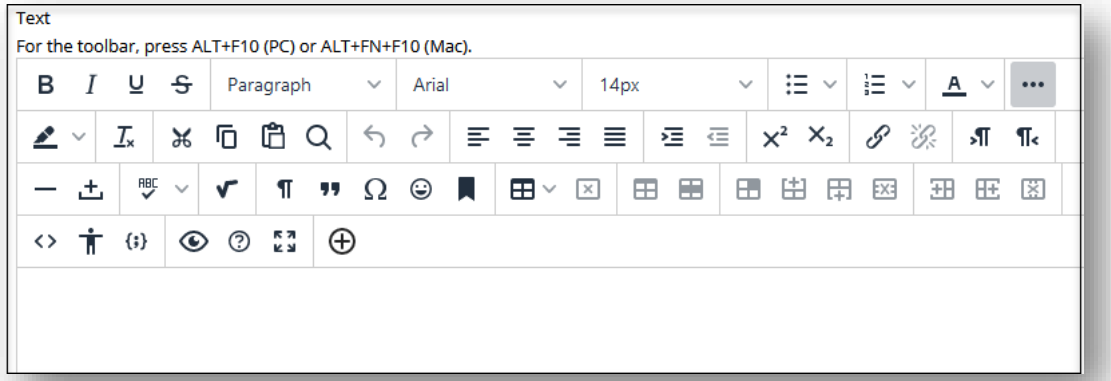
- Course Surveys
  - Beginning
  - Midterm
  - End of the semester
- Review and revise

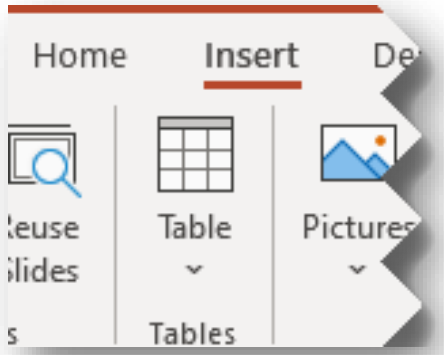
Part III
Tools for Content Creation, Delivery & Interaction

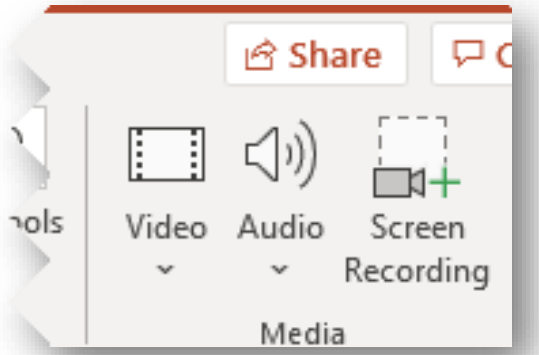
Tools for Content Creation

Welcome message & Course orientation

- MS Word or Blackboard Content Editor
- PowerPoint "Audio" or “Screen Recording”







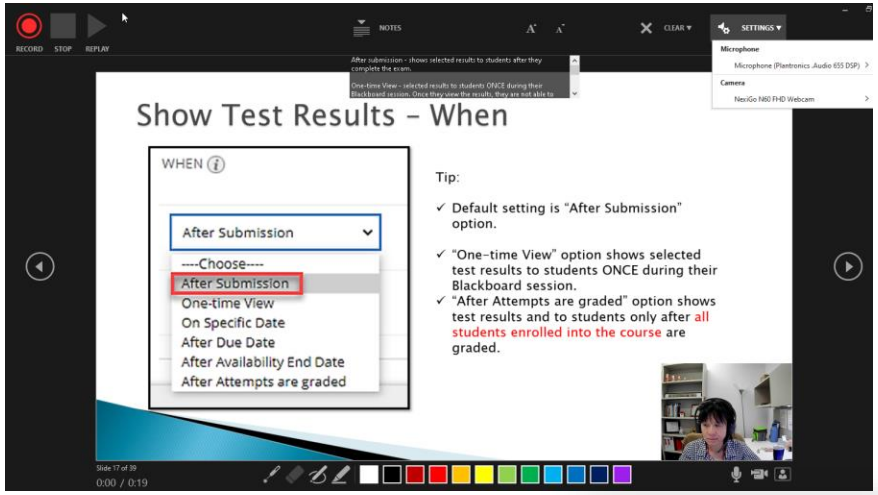
Tools for Content Creation - 2

Prerecorded Lecture

- PowerPoint “Record Slide Show”
- Open Broadcaster Software (OBS)
- Camtasia

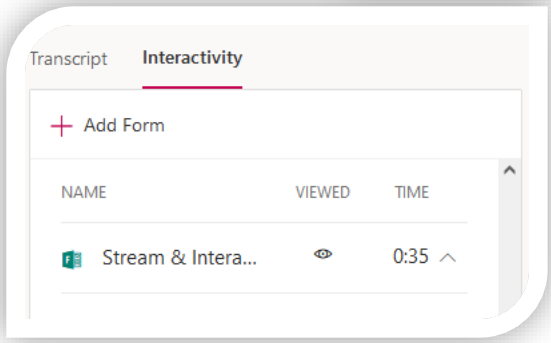
- Adding interactivity into the recording
  - Microsoft Classic Stream + Microsoft Forms

- Having the follow-up activity



OBS Studio

TechSmith Camtasia

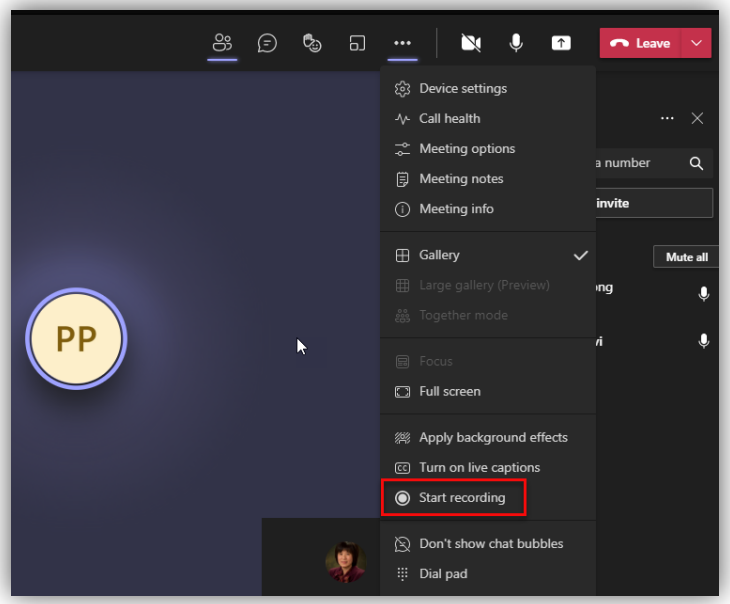


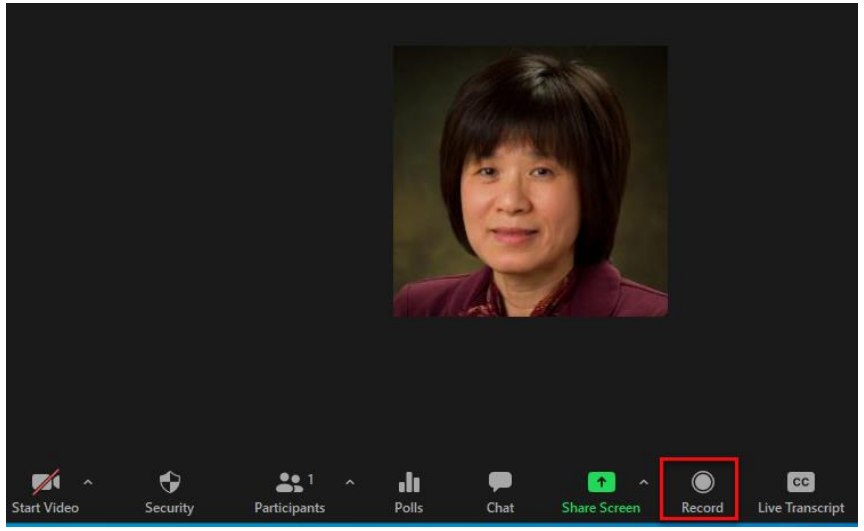
Tools for Content Creation - 3

Live Lecture Recording

- Microsoft Teams Meeting
  - Recording saved in SharePoint
- Zoom Meeting
  - Recording saved in your local computer or Zoom cloud

- Add closed caption to meet accessibility

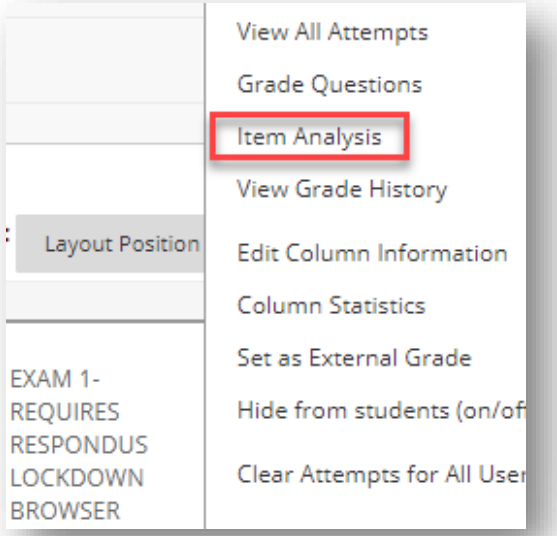


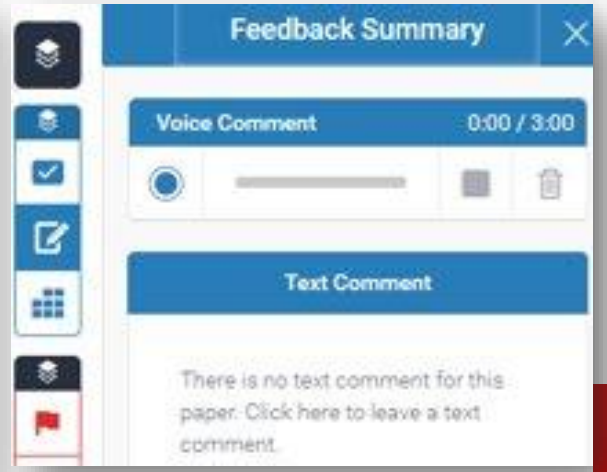


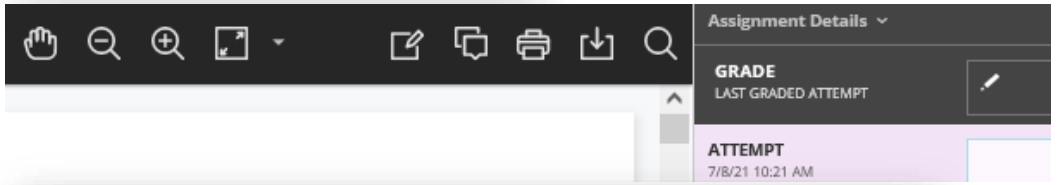
Tools for Content Creation - 4

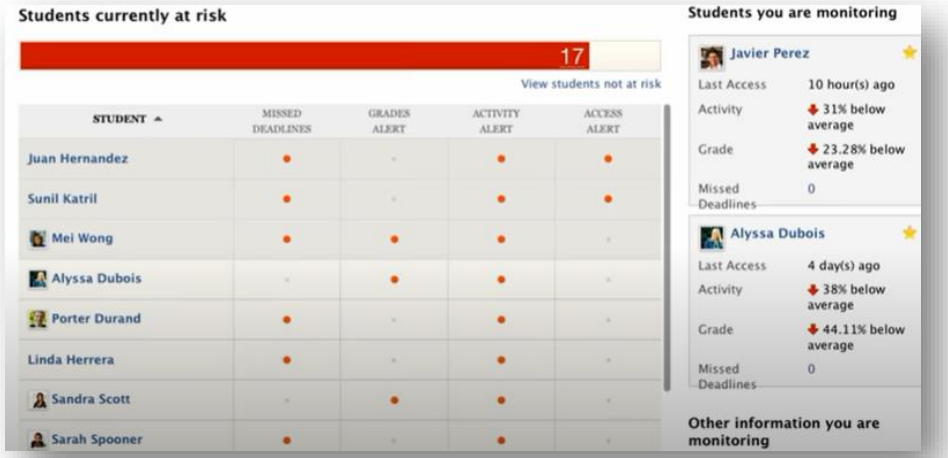
Assessments & Feedback

- Bb Test & Item Analysis
- Bb Assignment/Annotate/Rubric
- Turnitin/Inline grading/Audio feedback/Rubric
- Bb Discussion
- Blackboard Retention





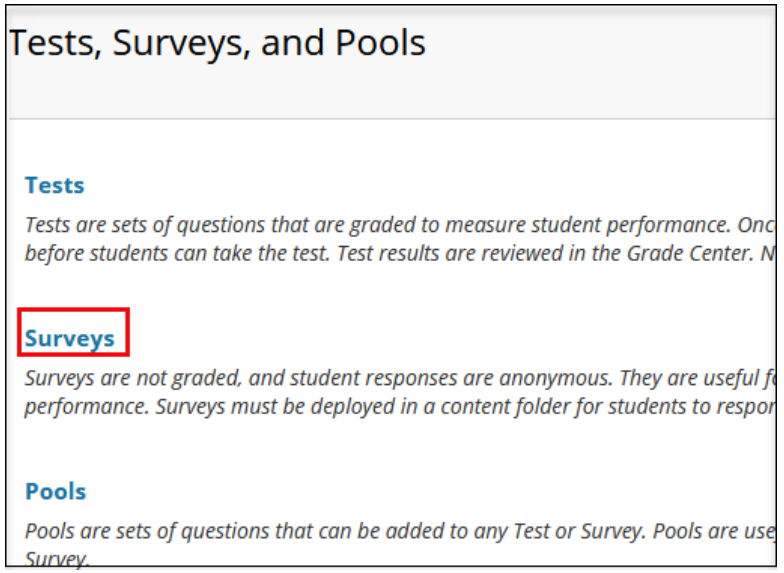


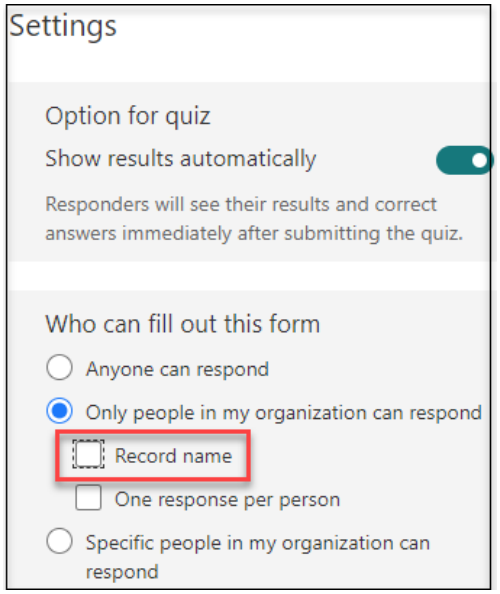


Tools for Content Creation - 5

Gather Students' Feedback

- Blackboard Survey
- Microsoft Forms





Tools for Content Delivery

- Blackboard
- Microsoft Teams
- UH SharePoint/OneDrive
- Microsoft Classic Stream
- YouTube

Tools for Instructor-Student Interaction

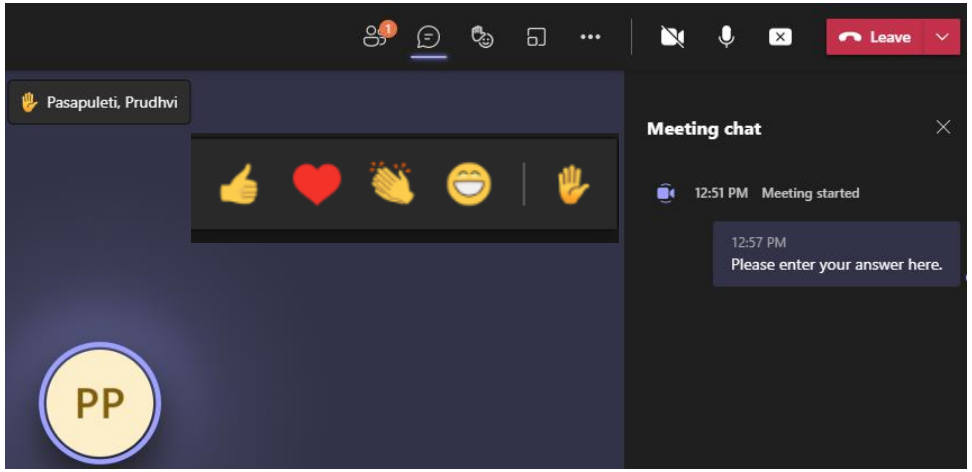
Synchronous lecture/meeting

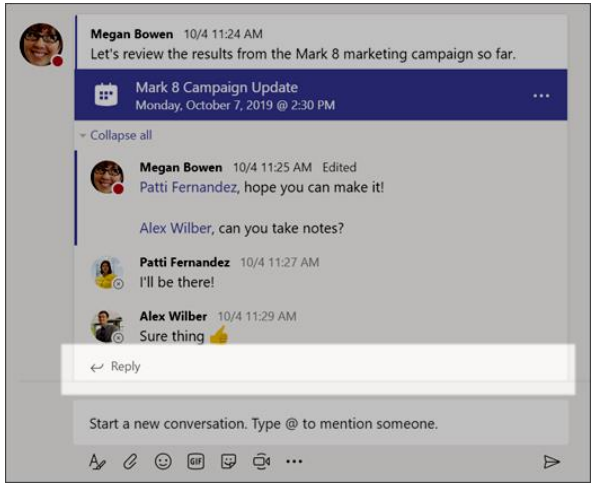
- Microsoft Teams
- Zoom

Communication with students

- Blackboard announcements
- Blackboard Email/Message
- Microsoft Teams Class Chat
- Microsoft Outlook

**Important: Use UH Email Address

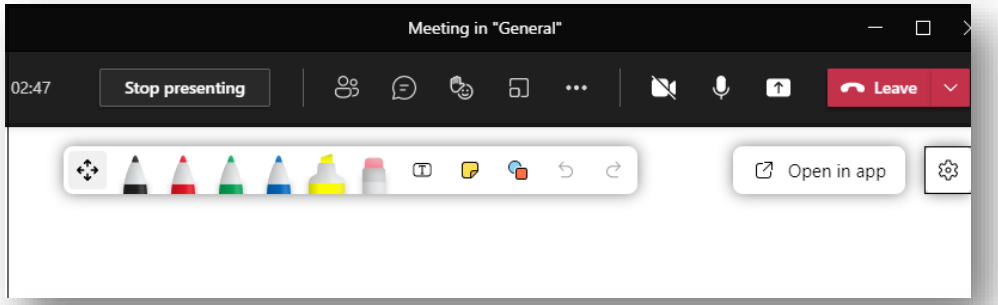


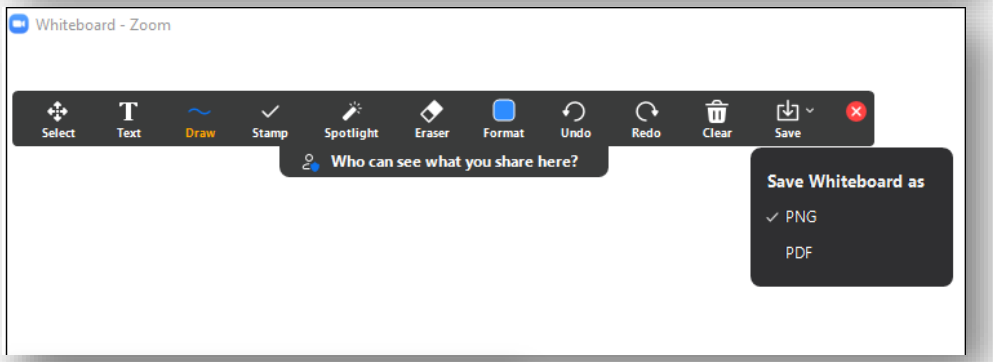


Tools for Instructor-Student Interaction -2

Live Lecture Engagement

- Teams or Zoom whiteboard
- Microsoft Forms or Zoom Poll
- TurningPoint
- Tophat
- Kahoot





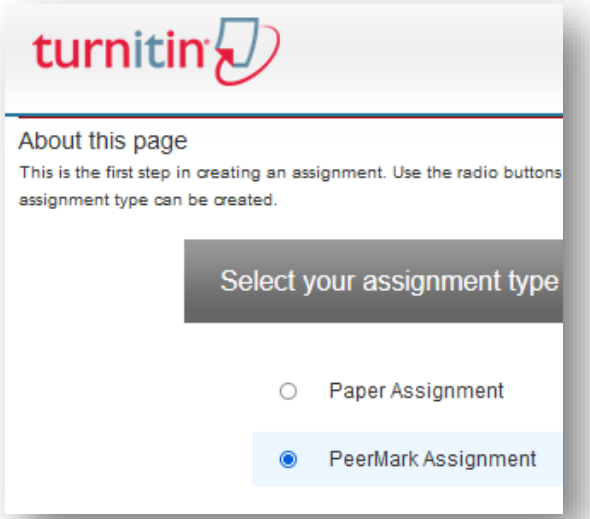
Tools for Student -Student Interaction

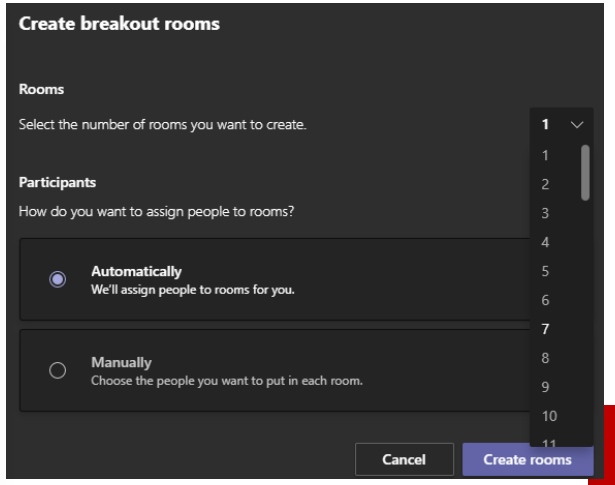
Critique, Discussion, & Connect

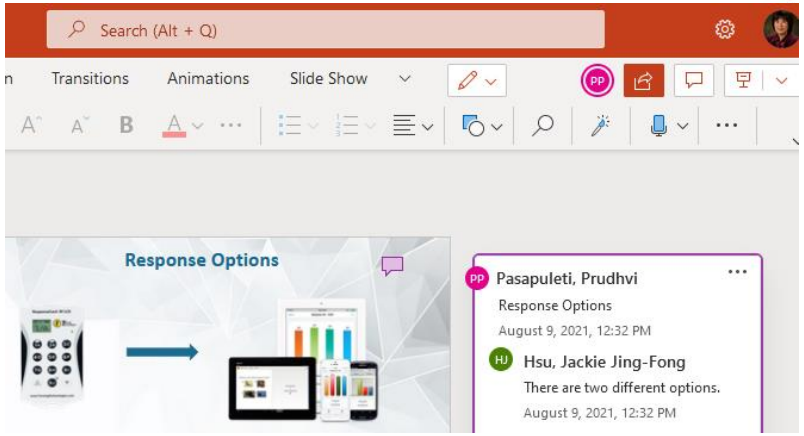
- Bb Discussion
- Bb “Self and Peer Assessment”
- Turnitin “PeerMark Assignment”
- Flipgrid

Collaboration

- Office 365 Web (Word, PowerPoint)
- MS Teams with breakout room
- Zoom breakout room







Poll Tool Usage

https://forms.office.com/r/5E1gtz4tiF

Poll Results:
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Considerations in Selecting Tools

- ✓ Utilize tools approved by UH IT for Support and FERPA
- ✓ Ensure tools meet accessibility standards
- ✓ Cost

Part IV
Inclusive Design & Accessibility

Poll: What is inclusive design?

- https://forms.office.com/r/1SqrRtH46w

Responses

- https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=vboLF_CikEytSw6PDwxCWccK4uuRb-dBpSboz6_fgXxUN0lRWDlPU08wVVdXQUZDNDBKN01GWVlVNy4u&AnalyzerToken=OATJZR4EVOfIeeavazDiyhyHOE0uvSIm

Inclusive Design

- Flexible
- Co-creation and frequent feedback from end users.
- Seeking contributions from excluded communities during the entire design and evaluation process (Garcia, 2019)

Examples of Inclusive Design

- Solicit feedback from students
- Provide alternate ways of submitting final project; website, short video, paper
  - Provide rubrics for the different formats
- Chosen readings reflect a diversity of contributors in the field
- Chosen content has multiple means of representation for accessibility and inclusiveness

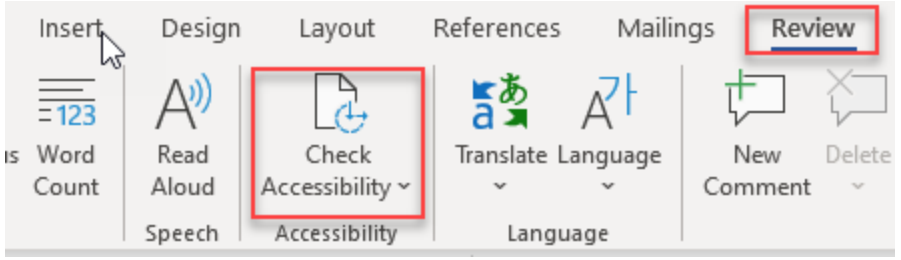
Accessibility

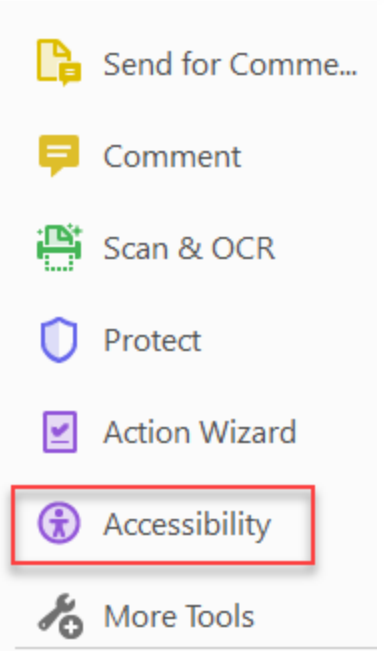
- Video: What is accessibility? (linkedin.com)
- The functional definition of accessibility states that people with disabilities must be provided the opportunity to
  1. acquire the same information,
  2. engage in the same interactions,
  3. enjoy the same services as people without disabilities, with
  4. "substantially equivalent ease of use."

  (Source: EIR Accessibility FAQs - University of Houston (uh.edu)
- Video: Online Accessibility - Giving College of DuPage Students an Equal Experience (In-Service)

Check Accessibility

- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel
- Adobe Acrobat
- Blackboard Ally





Blackboard Ally

- Ally automatically rates the accessibility of your Blackboard content and shows you how to fix accessibility issues.
  - The accessibility scores are low(red), medium (yellow), high (green), and perfect (dark green).
  - You want to fix content that is low or medium scoring.
  - Items with a high score can usually be easily fixed.
  - You can view the score directly in your content areas, content collection, or Course Tools > Accessibility Report

Common Accessibility Issues

- Document does not have headings
- Image does not have alternative text (Most common issue)
- PDF is a scanned image of text
- Document has tables that are missing header

Demostration – Word Accessibility

- Adding Heading
- Adding Alt text to an image
- Adding header to a table

Find Course Accessibility Score using Ally

Go to Blackboard > Course Tools > Accessibility Report

- Share the score in the meeting chat
- Seek help from your college ID or FDIS
- Review help resources

Resources

Resource file will be shared.

Help Resources

- UH Instruction Site
- College Instructional Designers
- FDIS Virtual Office Hours & Trainings
- UHIT Microsoft 365 Website
  office365@uh.edu

Questions

Contact fdis@uh.edu