

Incorporating Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) into Course Design and Delivery

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Today's Goals

1. Define Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in course design and delivery.
2. Identify strategies for incorporating RSI principles into various course components of course design and delivery.
3. Develop a plan for integrating RSI into existing courses or when designing new courses.

Why RSI Matters?

Definitions and activities that constitute “regular and substantive” interaction were last updated by the U.S. Department of Education on July 1, 2021.

- Institutions are expected to ensure **regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors** in their **distance education offerings**.
- Distinguishes “distance education” from correspondence education
- Pivotal in the ability for UC students to utilize Title IV funds (federal financial aid)

Also, RSI is embedded in the **latest best practices** and **quality assurance standards**:

- **QM Standard 3.5** - The types and timing of assessments provide learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.
- **QM Standard 5.3** - The instructor’s plan for regular interaction with learners in substantive ways during the course is clearly stated.

Defining RSI - Regular

An institution ensures **regular** interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency, by:

- Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a **predictable and scheduled basis** commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
- **Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success** and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for **promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction** with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Defining RSI - Substantive

Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes **at least two** of the following:

- Providing **direct** instruction;
- Assessing or providing **feedback** on a student's coursework;
- Providing information or responding to **questions** about the content of a course or competency;
- **Facilitating** a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency;
or
- Other instructional activities **approved** by HLC or the program's accrediting agency.

Defining RSI - Interaction

Types of Educational Interaction:

1. Student – Content
2. Student – Student
3. Student – Instructor



To meet RSI guidelines, interaction is **primarily initiated** by the instructor.

What is not RSI

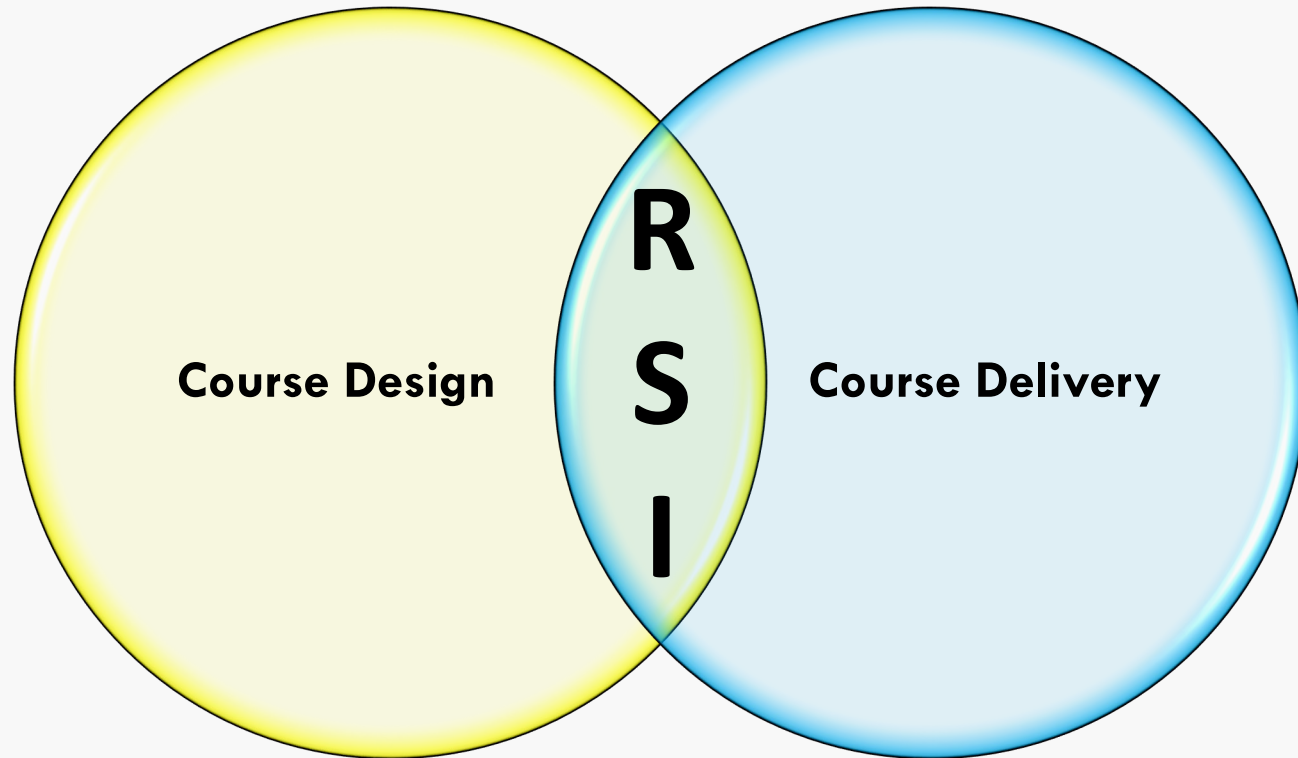


- Assignments that **do not** require the student to review the material and then **interact** with the instructor
- Instructor outreach that is **not related** to the content of the course
- Adding numeric grades to the course grade book **without other feedback**
- Auto-graded **assignments**
- Sending “**welcome**” or **general informational** messages (good to have, but not RSI)
- **Reminding** students of course policies or assignment deadlines
- Online discussion forums **not moderated, and responded to**, by the instructor

RSI Dashboard



Goal | RSI-minded Course Design and Delivery



Course Design Strategies | Make a Plan

- Plans for **regular** interaction that occurs on a **predictable and scheduled basis**
- Communicates** how you will **interact** with students
- Sets up** the course **structure** for **RSI-minded delivery**

Course Design Strategies | “Office” Hours on Syllabus

May be used to meet RSI requirements if instructors make themselves **virtually available** at a **specific time and modality** (versus “*By appointment*”).

- ✓ Consider engaging names
(e.g., *Mid-week Check-in; Coffee with Your Instructor*)
- ✓ Invite students to schedule 1-1 time with you to discuss concerns and progress in the course.



This is an example of an **opportunity** for interaction, not a requirement for student interaction.

Course Design Strategies | Communication Plan (Sample Language)

*As your instructor, I plan to **interact and engage** with each of you **regularly** throughout the term to support your learning by doing the following:*




- Providing **direct instruction** related to the course's learning objectives.*
- Providing **personalized feedback** on your submitted coursework.*
- Posting **regular announcements**.*
- Engaging in the course discussion** areas regarding academic course content when appropriate.*

Course Design Strategies | Assessment Schedule

Is there time for feedback to be:

- Provided quickly to the student?*
- Implemented before the next assessment is due?*

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
	 Module #: Assignment	
	 Module #: Discussion	
	 Module #: Quiz	

Course Design Strategies | Discussions

- ❑ Explain in the Discussion directions or Syllabus **how (and when) you will participate.**
- ❑ Add recorded lectures that are accompanied by a discussion to **engage** students with you **about the content** of the videos.
- ❑ Explain **how (and when)** you will provide specific, constructive, and personalized **feedback.**
- ❑ **Invite feedback from students** (survey) and use this to further interaction.

Course Design Strategies | Written Assignments & Quizzes

- ❑ Explain in the directions **how (and when)** you will provide specific, constructive, and personalized **feedback**.
 - ✓ *Drafts or No Drafts on written assignments?*
 - ✓ Feedback on quizzes

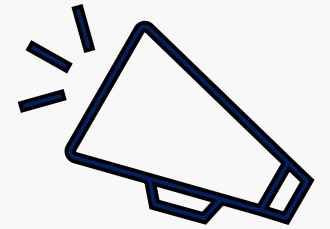
- ❑ Offer **study/review** sessions with you.

- ❑ **Invite feedback from students** (survey) and use this to further interaction.

Course Delivery Strategies | Implement Your Plan and Be Present

- Demonstrate a **strong presence** by taking an **active role** in course
 - ✓ Students should **see evidence** of **your activity** in the course each week!
- Hold those **scheduled, virtual office hours**
- Post **course-related announcements (written or video)**
- Monitor** each student's engagement and success; then interact with them accordingly (don't wait for them to ask for help)
- Participate** in Discussions
- Provide **feedback**

Course Design Strategies | Announcements



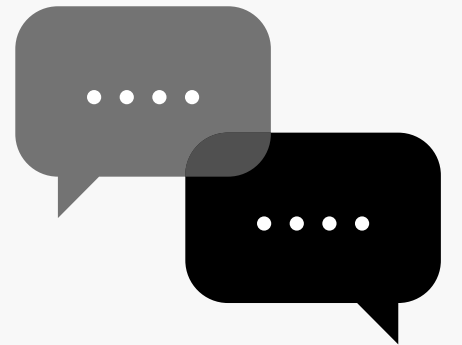
- Plan for weekly, written or video course announcements that address:
 - ✓ course content
 - ✓ questions for students to have in mind when completing the topic
 - ✓ expectations of students on assignments
 - ✓ tips for success

- Can be pre-planned to go out automatically **BUT** should be tweaked based on how delivery is going (e.g., summarize questions from the previous week; note trends observed in assignments or quizzes; preview difficult topics).

 For RSI, must be **academic in nature** and **relevant** to the course.

Course Delivery Strategies | Actively Participate in Discussions

- ❑ Pose guiding questions related to the course subject.
- ❑ Propose counter **points of view** students may not be considering.
- ❑ Establish connections among students' ideas.
- ❑ Provide encouragement.



Course Delivery Strategies | Feedback

Personalized, Specific Feedback (Substantive)	Frequent, Timely Feedback (Regular)
<p>Customized to the individual student and specific to the details of their coursework.</p> <p>Provide information students can use to understand where they are being successful and where they need to improve.</p>	<p>Provide feedback at least once a week during the course, starting in Week 1.</p> <p>Give early enough and with sufficient frequency for students to correct misunderstandings and deepen comprehension while the course is in progress.</p>

- Use LMS tools (where available)
 - ✓ Recorded comments (audio/video)
 - ✓ Annotations
 - ✓ Comment Library

- Offer further study guidance (virtual meetings or review sheets) in response to student questions or collective needs

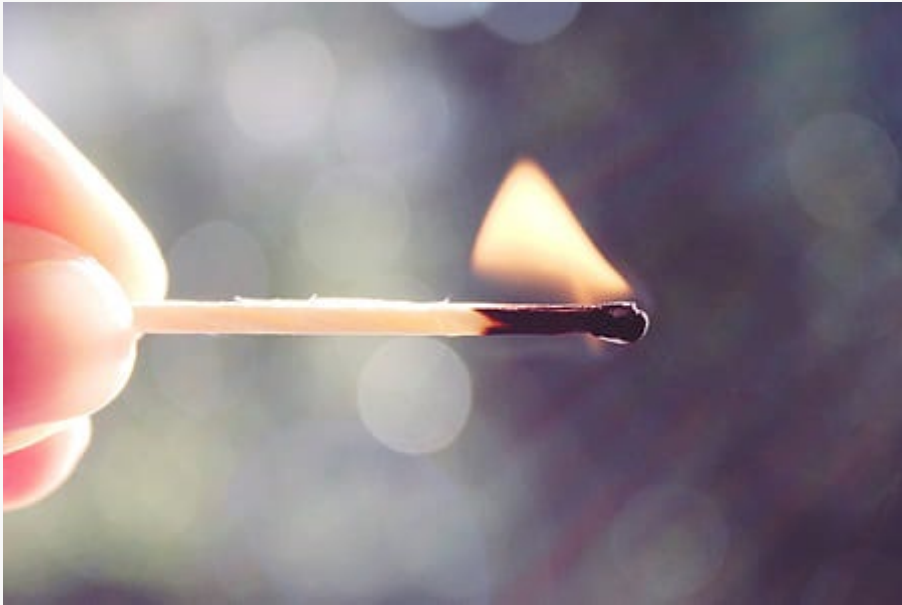
Course Delivery Strategies | Monitoring

- **Identify students** struggling to reach mastery through LMS and/or vendor tools
 - ✓ Gradebook (look for patterns)
 - ✓ Access/Login reports (when and how much)

- Offer additional opportunities for **interaction** and **support**

Your Mission

(should you choose to accept it)



1. Select at least one RSI strategy shared today for either course design or delivery.
2. Incorporate it into at least one of your teaching sections.
3. Monitor response from students.
Do you see a change?

My RSI Plan (see handout)

Design:

Course Area	Planned RSI Strategies	Notes
Syllabus <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Office Hours”• Communication Plan		
Announcements		
Content		
Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directions• Timing		
Other		

Delivery:

Course Area	Planned RSI Strategies	Notes
Active Presence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Office Hours”• Announcements		
Monitoring		
Content		
Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation• Feedback		
Other		



Questions?

Thank you for attending

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Extend Your Learning

Betts, K. (2023, March 2). Regular and substantive interaction: Resources to support learning, neuroplasticity, and regulations. *Frontiers, WCET.*

Kerensky, K. (2021, August 26). Regular and substantive interaction refresh: Reviewing and sharing our best interpretation of current guidance and requirements. *Frontiers, WCET.*

Kerensky, K. & Poulin, R. (2022, November 8). Regular and substantive interaction update: Where do we go from here? *WCET Frontiers.*

Online Learning Consortium. (2019). Regular and substantive interaction: Background, concerns, and guiding principles.