DYNAMIC SYLLABI, MINI-LECTURES AND STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS WITH MICROSOFT SWAY
A Quick-Start Guide for Teaching and Learning

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Dynamic Syllabi, Mini-Lecture, and Student Assignments with Microsoft Sway

If you would prefer a video tutorial on Sway, please click here: https://utep.yuja.com/V/Video?v=841469&node=3520461&a=893685442&autoplay=1

Teaching and Learning Considerations

Microsoft Sway is an application from Microsoft Office, available to faculty, staff, and students through Microsoft Office 365. It makes it easy to create and share interactive syllabi, mini-lectures, presentations, student assignments and more. There’s virtually no limit on what a person can express creatively!

How often do faculty have to say, “It’s in the syllabus” to a student who asked a question that could have been answered from, you guessed it, the syllabus! Why don’t students consult it when they have questions about the course? Would a change of design improve usability, readability, and how often the document is referred to? If the document was made interactive and could also “teach” a student the structure and design of a course from the onset, would there be fewer questions to a professor over the course of the semester regarding the administration of the course? Utilizing MS Sway can be a way of creating a student-center syllabus by making it aesthetically engaging, and remaining ADA compliant.

As more and more faculty provide their content online for students, they also expect more than the traditional lecture. Some faculty are still uncomfortable with video/multimedia options though. Digitizing our course content through something like MS Sway allows for faculty to be multimodal with their content-- creating sustainable mini-lectures, for example, that can be single-concept/skill focused, easily shared, and are not print-reliant.

And finally, there is no reason why we can’t challenge our students to express themselves in rhetorically-challenging ways. Perhaps the 8-12 page written research paper can be enhanced by integrating visuals, multimedia, and digital links for extended learning. Students would have to think beyond the written word, and utilize other modes of communication to analyze, argue, reflect and/or persuade. Not to mention the potential enjoyment we, as faculty, can experience through interactive assignments our students submit to us.

Best Practices: Have a Purpose for Integrating Technology

The SAMR Model for integrating technology into teaching, developed by Dr. Ruben Puenteedura, provides an instructional design model for moving through degrees of technology
adoption to find more meaningful uses of technology in teaching and move away from simply using “tech for tech’s sake.”

“SAMR” is an acronym that stands for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. The model supports and enables teachers to design, develop, and infuse digital learning experiences that utilize technology. The goal is to transform learning experiences so they result in higher levels of achievement for students.

**Here is an example of how Sway might fit within the SAMR model:**

**Substitution:** Students create a Sway instead of a written essay.

**Augmentation:** Students include photos, videos, and other graphics in their Sway to help classmates visualize and apply the content of their essay.

**Modification:** Students utilize Sway to present their essay virtually instead of in the classroom.

**Redefinition:** The teacher can create a Sway linking all of the presentations together to create a gallery of reports.

We encourage you to think about how you might use Sway to modify your teaching artifacts like:

- **Syllabi:** [https://sway.office.com/kH0cWi3RHW2RM5XX?ref=Link](https://sway.office.com/kH0cWi3RHW2RM5XX?ref=Link)
- **Presentations:** [https://sway.office.com/jbSRtnF95Jxav0LS?ref=Link](https://sway.office.com/jbSRtnF95Jxav0LS?ref=Link)
- **Mini-Lectures:** [https://sway.office.com/ku06mzDC6sC4lAyi?ref=Link&loc=play](https://sway.office.com/ku06mzDC6sC4lAyi?ref=Link&loc=play)

Or simply redefine student learning through an interactive final project.

**Model Copyright Compliance**

Whether they’re working in class or at home, students are accessing, viewing, creating, and sharing media as part of their day-to-day academic experiences. All of this is made possible by near ubiquitous access to digital devices and internet at the university and at their homes.

While faculty are conscious of plagiarism when student products are in the form of research papers, the complicated areas of copyright, fair use, and open access creative works (such as Creative Commons or public domain) are less familiar but are just as important.

As students engage in creative projects, copyright protections apply to their work too! If students are creating and remixing audio, video, text and images to “show what they know” it is
essential that they are doing all of this with a clear understanding of their own rights and the rights of other creators or owners of content.

Here are resources you can recommend to students to access copyright and royalty-free works they can incorporate into projects or presentations they might create with Microsoft Sway:


- Audio Tracks: [https://incompetech.com/](https://incompetech.com/)

- Stock Video Footage: [https://www.pexels.com/videos/](https://www.pexels.com/videos/)

Model ADA Compliance

The browser that is used to author and view a Sway determines the Accessibility features that are available. When viewing a Sway, you can turn on Accessibility view. This view displays a high-contrast style for easier reading, disables any animations, and supports keyboard navigation for use with screen readers.

Click More Options ( . . . ) on the top menu bar, and then click or tap Accessibility view. To quit Accessibility view, use the same command again.

Getting Started with Sway

To get started with Sway, visit [sway.office.com](https://sway.office.com) in any browser and then click Sign in on the top menu bar.
1. When prompted, enter your UTEP credentials.

Ex. stvrarela@utep.edu

2. Select Work or School Account—this will take you to a page where you will put in your complete UTEP credentials—SSO—single-sign on.

3. Sway Landing Page. This is where you have some decisions to make. Do you start from scratch and build a custom Sway? On the My Sways page that opens after you’ve signed in, click or tap Create New to start creating your first Sway.

4. Start from a Document: Starting from a document means you can simply upload something like a syllabus or a written lecture and it will automatically digitize it—as was as begin an initial design layout. This is something you can change later though!

**Storyline: Begin Adding/Editing Your Content**

The **Storyline** is where you type, insert, edit, and format the content that tells your story. Content is arranged in sequential order by adding cards, each of which holds the type of content you want — such as text, images, and even videos. The order of cards can be rearranged at any time to suit your needs.
Add Content and Images

To add content to your Sway, such as text, images, or videos, click or tap the + icon at the bottom of any existing card. You can also drag and drop text and images right onto your Storyline. (Don’t hesitate to experiment — you can change the order of your content at any time and customize each card the way you want.)

You can easily search for and add additional content to your Sway, such as an image that is stored on your computer or mobile device. Sway can also search the Web for the most relevant content, such as videos, and add it to your Sway. On the menu bar, click Insert, select your preferred content source from the menu, and then enter any search keyword or phrase into the Search sources box.

Customize It: Design and Style

Sway lets you focus on what you’re trying to communicate by taking care of the formatting, design, and layout of your content. You can keep Sway’s suggested default design, select and apply your own, and even customize the layout.

To choose a style for your Sway, click Design on the menu bar, and then select Styles. To choose a random look and mood for your Sway at any time, click the Remix! button until you find a design and layout you like. You can also adjust a specific part of the currently applied style, such as color, font, and textures, by clicking the Customize button in the Styles pane.

If you want to control how others will view and navigate your Sway once you’ve shared it, select whether your content should scroll vertically, horizontally, or appear like a presentation.
Preview Before Launch

You can preview your work in progress at any time by clicking the Design tab. When you preview your Sway, you can see how it will appear to others when you later decide to share it. To fully experience your Sway, click the Play button on the top menu bar.

To return to your Storyline when you’re done previewing your Sway, click the Storyline tab.

Share It With the World (or Just Blackboard)!

Click the Share button on the top menu bar and then select how you want to share your Sway. We suggest selecting “Anyone with a link,” so that anyone can open it in and out of Blackboard.

Use the link it provides to share—or to use as a hyperlink in your Bb shell.

Did We Mention the Analytics?

That’s correct, you can actually track how often and how “deeply” your students are reading your Sway. They aren’t perfect, but very useful to have an estimate of engagement!