

# Transform your teaching with Perusall



Webinar  
February 24, 2021



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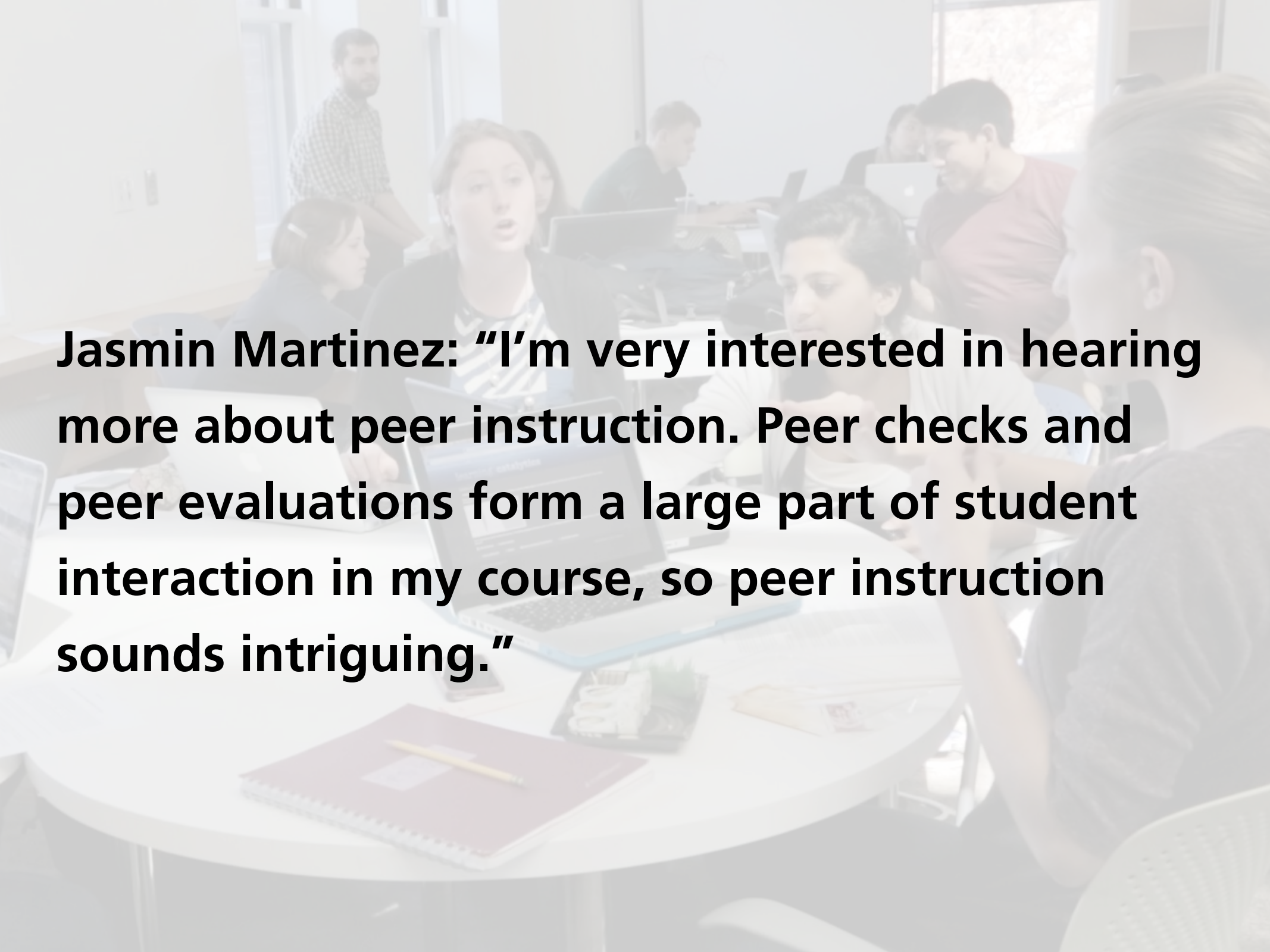
**Goal of this session**

**demonstrate how to integrate Perusall  
in your teaching approach**



**information  
transfer**

**sense-making**



**Jasmin Martinez: "I'm very interested in hearing more about peer instruction. Peer checks and peer evaluations form a large part of student interaction in my course, so peer instruction sounds intriguing."**



A group of people are gathered in a meeting room, seated around a large white circular table. Several laptops are open on the table, and a purple spiral notebook with a yellow pencil lies in the foreground. The people are engaged in discussion, with some looking at the laptops and others looking towards each other. The room has large windows in the background, letting in natural light. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

**Icebreaker – Meet your team!**

**Discuss pre-assignment on Perusall**

# **Perusall Feedback — Pedagogy**

- **motivating students**
- **instructions to students**
- **instructor involvement**
- **results**



## **Motivating students**

**Wade James: “What if student do not read the material before attending live class? What is the system of pos/neg reinforcement used to motivate students to pre-engage with material?”**

**Aviva Bower: “Some students struggle with generating disciplinary questions that lead to learning. Instructors will need to help students develop this aspect of reading.”**





## **Motivating students**

**Annèl van Rooyen: "The kind of interactive activities initiated in class ought to influence the future level of complexity of students' interactions during preparation done on Perusall."**

**Jérémy Barbay: "Did any one experiment with asking students to read research papers about Flipped Classroom as the first assignment at the beginning of the semester?"**



## **Instructions to students**

**Kattarina Biss: "Is there a place to add directions/reminders within Perusall on what students are supposed to be doing?"**

**Luca Tagliacozzo: "Do you think we should share these informations [how breaking up reading etc. benefits the learning] with our students at the beginning of the course?"**

Announcements

Syllabus

Modules

Assignments

Slack

Grades

People

Manage Course

Library Reserves

Academic Integrity Policy

Support Resources

Panopto

Collaborations

Outcomes

Rubrics

Files

Pages

Discussions

Quizzes

Settings

# Reading Assignment Overview

Because there are no lectures in AP50, you will be using *Perusall* to familiarize yourself interactively with the basic content of the course. You will do so by reading one chapter per week from a textbook that evolved from a set of lecture notes for an introductory physics course. The textbook, *Principles and Practice of Physics* (Eric Mazur, Pearson 2015) is available at no cost in Perusall. If you want a printed copy, you can purchase the book via one of the many online textbook vendors, but this is neither required nor necessary.

The *Perusall* platform permits you to interact asynchronously with other students in the class and help each other build a deeper understanding by annotating and discussing the material within the context of the text you are reading.

If you haven't yet done so, watch this [short introductory video](#) about *Perusall* before proceeding.

## Purpose of the reading assignments

The goal of the reading is to gain sufficient knowledge to be able to participate in subsequent activities in a meaningful way — just as a lecture would (but now you can do it at your own convenience and pace, and you can interact with others). The goal is not to master every little detail — the other activities are designed to reinforce your understanding of the important principles before you begin to apply them in the projects. There is no need to memorize any of the information in the text, as you will always have access to it. Therefore you can focus on understanding, rather than memorizing.

## Fostering a community of learners in *Perusall*

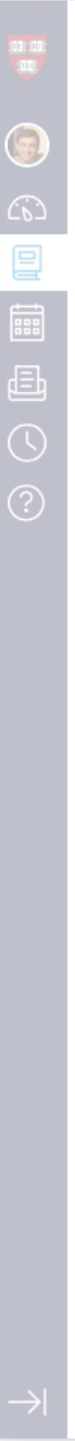
Perusall is **your space** and provides a good opportunity to create happenstance encounters and build an online community of learners. The teaching team will **not** participate in the discussions in Perusall, although to help facilitate and bootstrap both the conversation and your critical thinking about the material, we will pre-annotate the chapters in Perusall with a number of questions that students in previous years have asked. The [Perusall Curators Program](#), however, permits some of the most burning lingering questions or points of confusion to be transferred to the #persuall-loose-ends channel on Slack, where everyone, including members of the teaching team, can join in on a conversation.

With this space on Perusall for interacting with others also comes the responsibility of maintaining [professionalism](#). It is important to always behave respectfully, even with conflicting view points. While there is no moderation of the annotations on Perusall, **you can anonymously report an annotation** if you deem it to be inappropriate or plagiarized. Click the small 'hazard' triangle underneath the annotation and the annotation will be removed until it is reviewed by the teaching team.

## Maximizing your benefit from these assignments

Research on the use of Perusall shows that students who do the following perform better in the course overall:





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[http://bit.ly/perusall\\_instructions](http://bit.ly/perusall_instructions)

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## **Instructor involvement**

**Luca Tagliacozzo: “I am a bit scared in facing a course based on questions, in many cases, I struggle to move the information into a different context. How to learn such skill?”**

**April Eisman: “So far, I’ve found it better to not engage directly in Perusall conversations with students as it stifles their interactions. Have others found this to be the case as well?”**

A group of students are gathered around a white circular table in a classroom or meeting room. Several laptops are open on the table, and a student in the foreground is looking at one. Other students are visible in the background, some working on laptops and others in discussion. The scene is brightly lit with natural light from a window on the right.

**Instructor involvement**

**How I prepared myself**



## Results

**Christina Johnson: “Are there studies to demonstrate the use of Perusall has increased the percentage of those that complete readings?”**

**Pam Robertson: “I’ve only used Perusall for one reading assignment so far in my course. I’ve was impressed with both the quantity of students who completed the task and the quality of the comments they added.”**

# Perusall Feedback — Technology

- confusion report
- grouping
- scoring
- other features



## **Confusion report**

**David Stehlik: “Honestly, I’ve found the confusion report to be of interest, but not especially helpful. Perhaps you can help here. I would love to learn better methods of coaching students to comment in a way the system will catch/organize their inquiries.”**



## **Grouping**

**April Eisman: “20 students seems like a really large group. What is the optimal group size? I’ve been using 10 recently, and manually assigning students according to when in the week they tend to engage with the material.”**

**Debi Aggers: “Is it possible to set a smaller number than 20 to auto populate this group feature?”**

## Scoring

**April Eisman: “I’m looking forward to better understanding how Perusall grades.”.... “What do students see if we release Perusall grades to them? Do they just get their number (0-3), or do they get feedback on why it’s that number?”**

## Scoring

**Belen Palop: “I wonder if we can make the whole thing “work” without scoring and grading. I would love to see students trying to prepare better for the lessons for the sake of learning, and not trying to “beat the algorithm” to get better scores”**



## Features

**April Eisman: “Is there a way to highlight information one wants to remember but doesn’t necessarily want to comment upon? Or is the idea that when one finds something important, one should say why in the comments field?”**

**“There are also hashtags, which is something I’d like to know more about -- are people using these, and are they helpful?”**

# Documents you can use with Perusall

- **PDF, Word, html, or ePub files (free)**
- **video—YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, Dropbox (free)**
- **open access material (free)**
- **source code with syntax highlighting (free)**
- **books (purchased by students or institution)**

# Reflection

- asynchronous preparation
- synchronous time for discussion





## Reflection

- **asynchronous preparation**
- **synchronous time for discussion**
- **dig deeper post-session**

**for a copy of this presentation:**

**mazur.harvard.edu**

**additional resources in Perusall course**

**also see [bit.ly/fliponline](http://bit.ly/fliponline)**

**Follow me!**



**@eric\_mazur**