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Engaging HyFlex: Bridging the Remote/In-person Engagement Gap through Instant Polling Slides

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HyFlex Engagement

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Teaching Practice & the Need it Addresses

To provide learning opportunities for diverse and unpredictable student needs during the pandemic, I offered HyFlex courses in Spring and Fall 2022. Students could either attend my class in person or remotely through WebEx.

The first half of my first HyFlex semester was challenging: Engagement among the in-person students was high, with a consistent 100% of students speaking at least once to the whole class during each class session. Small group discussions among the in-person students were visibly engaged, and remote students reported engaging discussions in the WebEx breakout rooms. However, many remote students did not engage with the whole class: Typically, one-third of students remained off-camera and never spoke or used the chat function while with the whole class.

I needed a way to engage remote students, and instant polling seemed a possible solution. Older polling technologies like clickers have been found to increase engagement in learning activities (Burkhardt and Cohen, 2012), and instant polling through smart phones have been found to provide real-time feedback on student comprehension in in-person classes (Johnson and Babler, 2017).

UNLV supports *Slido* instant polling integrated into WebEx, optimized for remote audience engagement. To generate engagement polls—including ratings, rankings, word clouds, open text responses and informal quiz questions—for both remote and in-person students, I used a variation of *Slido* not directly supported by UNLV. I generated engagement questions on Google slides using the *Slido* Google extension, and students accessed the instant poll through a QR code or at Slido.com with a passcode.

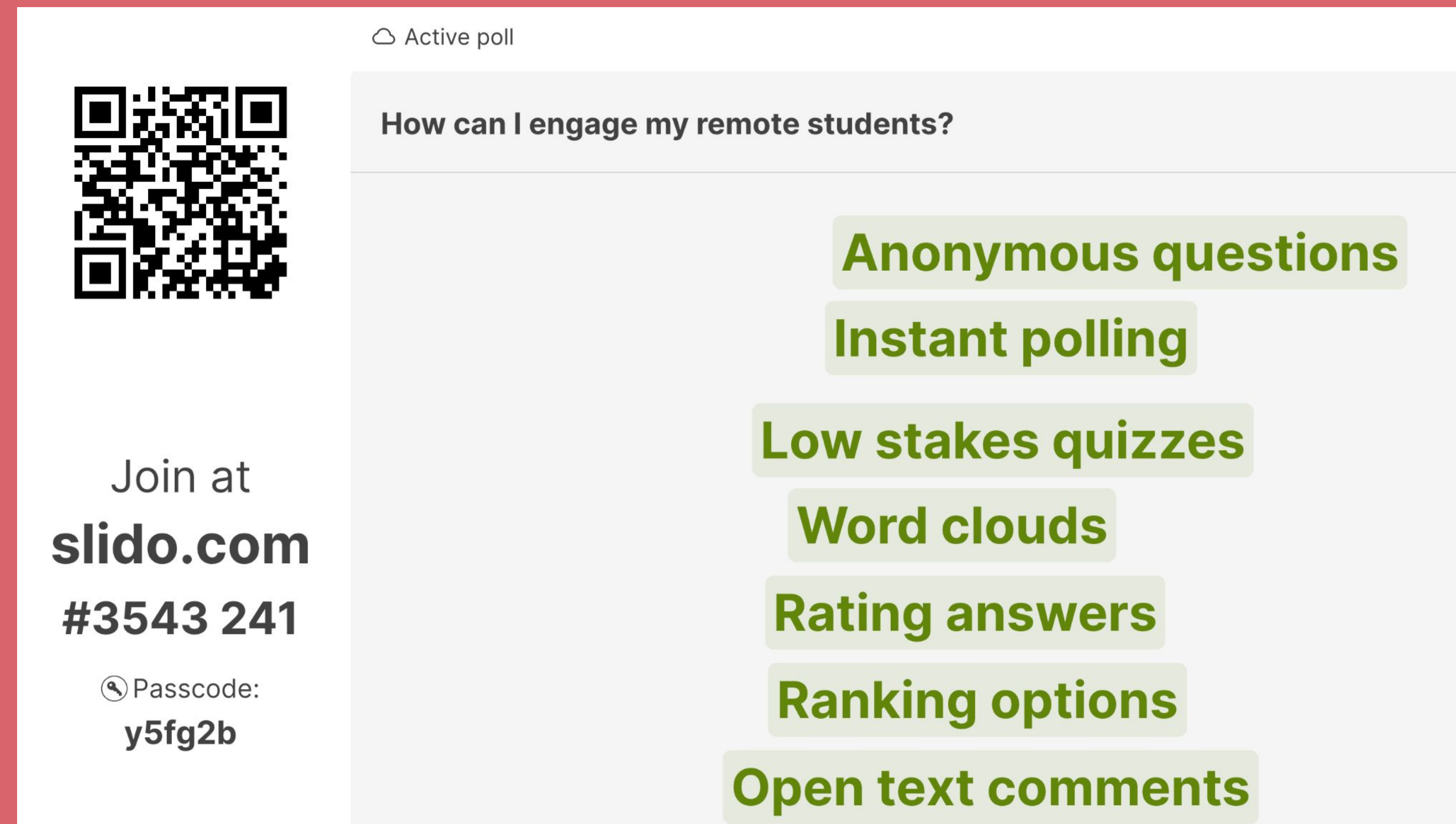
Through instant polling with *Slido* interactive slides, I was able to create opportunities for communicating opinions, learning reflections, and could gauge comprehension through low-stakes quizzes.

Engagement by remote students increased measurably.

UNLV

Best Teaching Practices Expo 2023

Bridging the remote/in-person engagement gap through *Slido* instant polling slides



Active poll

How can I engage my remote students?

- Anonymous questions
- Instant polling
- Low stakes quizzes
- Word clouds
- Rating answers
- Ranking options
- Open text comments

Join at
slido.com
#3543 241

Passcode:
y5fg2b

A *Slido* slide asking for open text responses.

Evidence it Benefits Students

Engagement by remote students increased dramatically after I started using *Slido*'s instant polling. In the first half of my first HyFlex course, I did not use instant polling. Typically one-third of the remote students did not actively engage in whole course discussions. In the second half of my first HyFlex course, I started using instant polling/quiz slides. Typically, all but one remote student interacted with the whole class through the polling slides in each class session. The rate of unmuting and speaking remained the same as before the intervention, with some remote students interacting with the whole class.

In my second HyFlex course, I used instant polling/quiz slides at every class session. Consistently, 100% of remote students interacted several times in every class. All students participated in *Slido* quizzes, word clouds, and open-ended responses. One half of remote students unmuted and spoke several times during each class session. While this increase in engagement might not have been caused only by the use of instant polling, it is an interesting pattern which can be investigated further.

Tips & Resources

Educators can use instant polling—such as with *Slido* in Google slides—in synchronous courses, either for in person and/or remote audiences.

While I used instant polling to improve engagement among remote students in a HyFlex course, this practice can also be used to check understanding, to provide opportunities to express opinions, and for informal low-stakes quizzes in any synchronous instruction.

Information on how to use *Slido* instant polling is available at Slido.com. Members of the UNLV community can use Slido for free with their UNLV.edu gmail account.

Slido instant polling can be integrated into WebEx sessions, or it can be used in Google slides for creating polling slides. UNLV provides support for faculty using *Slido* in WebEx, while clear instructions for its use in Google Slides are available at Slido.com.

Acknowledgements

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