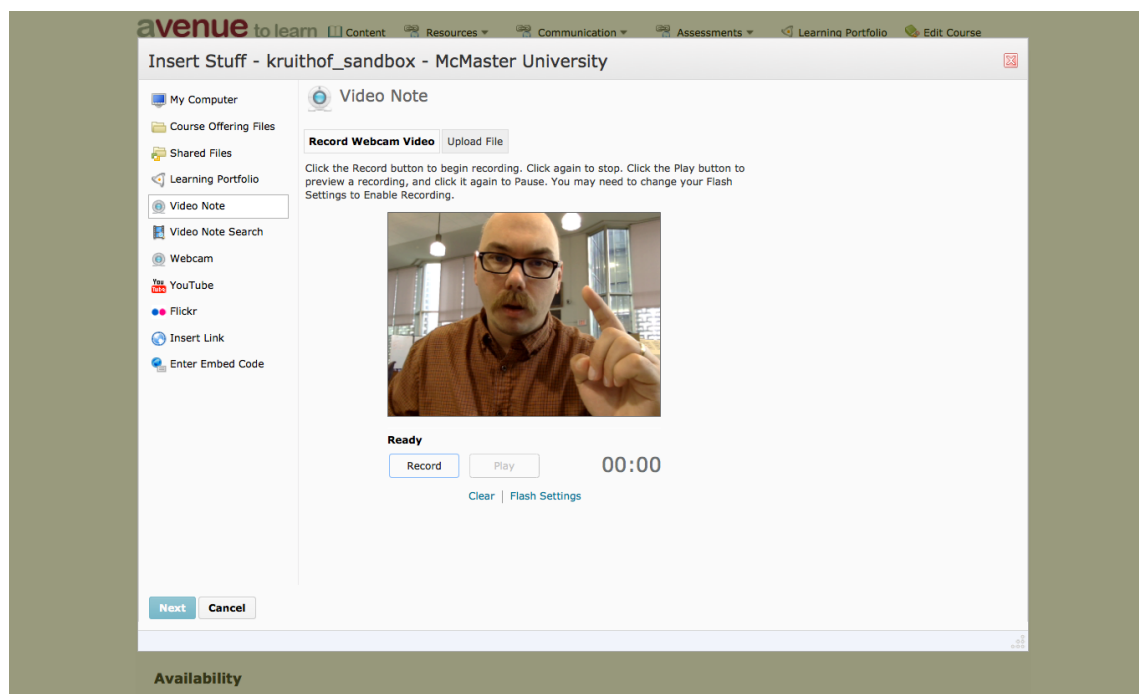


What's New in Avenue - Fall 2014

Avenue to Learn will be upgraded on August 10, 2014, from version 10.2 to version 10.3 which will bring many functional upgrades throughout the system. Many of these upgrades are for Administrators, but it is worth noting some of the additional changes that will have an effect on all users of the system. Those changes are listed below.

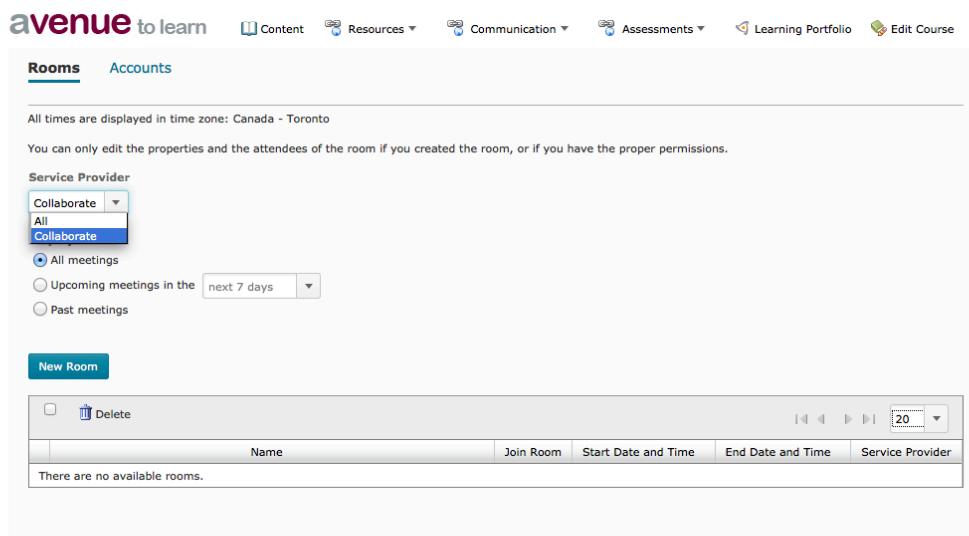
VIDEO NOTE

Originally an improvement to 10.2, Video Note was turned on in January, 2014. This feature allows any user to create an up to three-minute video. Originally this was seen as a way for instructors to provide video feedback in the Dropbox tool, however there are other areas of the system have access to Video Note for both students and instructors. Some of these areas include web document Artifacts in the Learning Portfolio, News items, Discussions topics, Content topics, Dropbox submission feedback, and anywhere else there is an HTML editor window for authoring posts or content. Video Note can be activated from the *Insert Stuff* button.



ONLINE ROOMS

In July 2014, we completed testing on the Blackboard Collaborate integration. All Avenue instructors can create Blackboard Collaborate sessions within their course shell. Currently Blackboard Collaborate users had to login to the Collaborate portal to create and manage their sessions. With this new integration, the management of Blackboard Collaborate sessions can be scheduled and created within the course shell. This allows instructors to create online sessions using Blackboard Collaborate restricted to just those who are enrolled in the course. Recordings can also be accessed through the Avenue to Learn interface.



PEARSON MYLABS INTEGRATION

We are pleased to announce integration between Pearson MyLabs and Avenue to Learn. This allows anyone using the Pearson MyLabs tools to have grades pushed back to Avenue's gradebook as well as single sign-on capabilities from within Avenue's Content tool. We expect this integration to be available in late August after it finishes testing on our test server.

NEW IN AUGUST

The August upgrade brings many minor improvements to the system and one major change to each of Discussions and Quizzes. For those of you who were fatigued by the rapid changes made to the system over the last two years, you will be happy with these series of moderate improvements.


CONTENT

Instructors can now issue a notification to students that a content item has changed. There is no work required to issue a notification – it is an opt-in process by students. In our informal polls, 72% of students at McMaster who answered our poll used notifications to keep up to date on the course materials and events. Instructors should encourage students to turn on notifications for their current courses and update their notification settings every semester.

Notifications

Control how you receive notifications about activity in your courses. You can receive a periodic summary of activity, or receive instant notifications as things happen.


Contact Methods

Email Address
Send email notifications to: user@gmail.com 
[Change your email settings](#)

Mobile Number
[Register your mobile](#)

Summary of Activity

Email me a summary of activity for each of my courses.

How often?
 

Instant Notifications

	Email	SMS
Content - content item updated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussions - new post in a forum, topic, or thread that I subscribed to in instant notifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dropbox - dropbox folder due date or end date is 2 days away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grades - grade item released	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grades - grade item updated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Portfolio - feedback added to subscribed items	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Another additional benefit for those who create Content using the HTML editor – you no longer have to click in an empty box to activate the HTML editor – by default the HTML editor is available immediately. The editor is also no longer split into basic and advanced functionality. Rather all functions are available as a default.

QUIZZES AND SURVEYS

Both Quizzes and Surveys have undergone some improvements in tab structure allowing users to complete the construction of quizzes faster. The Layout/Questions tab has been moved to the Properties tab. Grading information, attempts and other assessment pieces have been consolidate in a new Assessment tab (replacing the Attempts page). Quiz submission views can be viewed for x minutes immediately after a quiz attempt has been submitted. We have found that this new creation method speeds up Quiz creation and improves the flow of this process.

Also if you are using IP restrictions, there is a new setting to restrict submission views to a series of IP addresses.

DISCUSSIONS

Improvements to Discussions continue – the Grid view, is no longer available. This change was announced in our previous update issued in July 2013. The new Discussion List presents information about your topics in a compact way that is easy to scan. There is now a Hide All Topic option, which closes all topics from view. There is also a Reddit-style voting option (upvote/downvote option or, just an upvote) in addition to the previous star rating system. This is particularly useful for students to identify important or common questions if discussions are used as a Q & A forum. Posting to multiple threads is now possible for Instructors who would want to provide general guidelines applicable to multiple threads. Discussion statistics are also improved.

DROPBOX

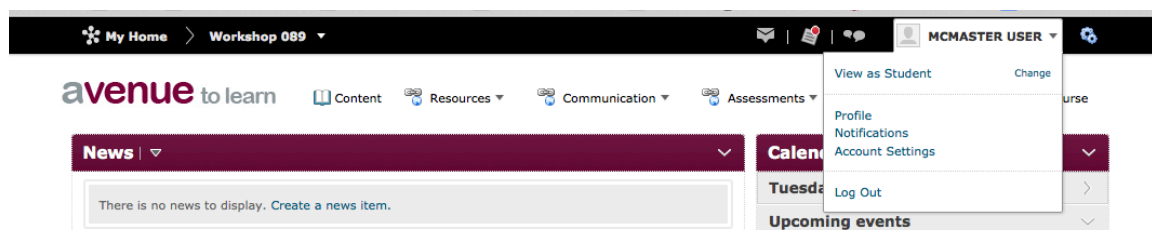
The Dropbox no longer requires a file to be submitted which means that Instructors and TAs can mark and give feedback to students who did not submit through the Dropbox tool or did submit assignments through an alternate method.

TOOLS

With the upgrade there is a new method for enabling or disabling tools at the course level – a new toggle switch replaces the existing tool select and change method of turning off tools within a course. We encourage faculty to exercise caution when turning off tools as there may be unexpected consequences for disabling tools at the course level that may impact your ability to configure your course.

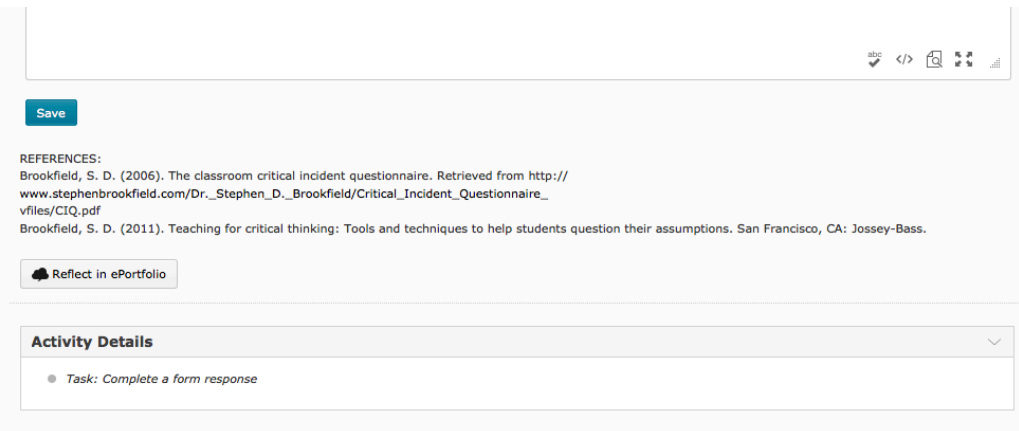
ROLE SWITCH

For Instructors and TA1, you can now see your course as a person in a Student role would – using the “View as...” underneath your name in the top right hand corner of the screen. The Role Switch will still be available to add to your course shell should you need to view the course from a different role, however it will not be part of the default page layout.



LEARNING PORTFOLIO

There is now a button in Content to Reflect in Learning Portfolio. This feature can be used as a study tool or to connect academic learning to co-curricular learning. This new function allows for reflective practice to be embedded in content creation. Previously, if students were asked to think about or reflect on a Content item, the reflective process would have been several steps removed from the source material.



Exporting entire Learning Portfolios are now easier My Items > More Actions > Go to Import/Export page, allowing for backups to your personal storage device.

Finally, Form creation can occur from within Content rather than just under Edit Courses. This improvement will allow faculty to develop guided self-reflective practice in context with other learning in the system.

Avenue to Learn Support is available Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm through three methods:

- Phone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 22911
- E-mail: support.avenue@cill.mcmaster.ca
- Web: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/help/forms/form-ticketsubmit.html>.