

Using social media to engage learners in conversations about their learning

Digital pinboards

Use a digital pinboard (e.g. Padlet, ScoopIt, Pinterest, eduClipper) to collate student feedback on a particular topic or service. Make sure staff use the same medium to respond, so students can see how their ideas are being used and what is going to happen as a result.

Twitter

Set up a twitter tag and have students tweet their feedback, suggestions and ideas on a digital issue. Again staff should use the same tag to respond.

When online media have been used to engage students, find opportunities to bring the discussion into real world shared spaces e.g. use big screens in the library or common areas, to show the debate taking shape.

Suggestions box

Also consider using a parallel off-line medium e.g. a traditional 'suggestions box' or wall, or a literal pinboard, to involve students on the spot and engage those for whom online media are less comfortable.

Electronic polling

Teaching staff can get into the habit of seeking feedback from students at the start of teaching sessions (and responding in the way the session is designed and run) and/or at the end (as summative review). Electronic polling can be set up quickly and easily for this purpose, and some applications allow students to use their mobile phones for this - but there is nothing wrong with a show of hands.

Encouraging participation

Use student champions and representatives to encourage participation, for example, at induction events. Reps should have tablet computers to give access to virtual consultations, and alternatives (e.g. printed postcards) for use on the spot.

When to ask for feedback

Getting feedback is especially important when students have been asked to do something new with technology. This needn't be a survey or feedback sheet - just asking students 'how did it go?' and 'what were the issues?' acknowledges their experience, and gives enough feedback to redress problems before they have too much impact.



Helen Beetham,
Consultant in Higher Education,
helen.beetham@gmail.com



This is one of the Jisc Digital Student Exemplars. To see more, go to
digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org/wp/exemplars/