Using Assessments & Polls (in and out of the classroom)

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Overview

Hopes for our time
  • Meet new people
  • Share experiences with one another
  • Gain ideas for how to use polls and assessments effectively in the classroom

Session Plan
  • Describe three basic types of assessments / polls that I use
  • Discuss technological options
  • Discuss possibilities for and barriers to your use of polls and assessments
Some benefits of assessments and polling

- Increased attendance
- Increased participation and engagement
- Enhanced learning

Further information


• How might polls or assessments add value to the specific courses that you teach?

• What barriers do you see to actually using polls or assessments in the future?
Three types of polls / assessments that I use

- In-class poll: Non-anonymous
- In-class poll: Anonymous
- Out-of-class assessment
In-Class Poll (1): Non-anonymous

• When is hand-raising for polls particularly useful?
  – Learn about your students’ backgrounds or opinions
  – Questions are binary and not too personal
  – Quickly show majority / minority positions; specific distributions aren’t that important
  – Highlight individual positions

• Common classroom applications
  – Taking a stand (e.g., “Whose support is most critical?”)
  – Turning the tide (e.g., “Should you take the promotion?”)
In-Class Poll (2): Anonymous

• When is a de-identified poll most useful?
  – Quantifying positions quickly and showing distributions
  – Minimizing social influence in responses
  – Gradations are important (i.e., continuous response scales)
  – Devices are in use for other reasons

• Common classroom applications
  – Plunge into a topic
  – Highlight polarized views
  – Show a class distribution for touchy subjects

• Example: How ethical is it to use tactics like the pharmaceutical salespeople?
Out-of-Class Assessment

• When is an out-of-class assessments most useful?
  – Longer, multi-item assessment or questionnaire
  – Reflection is important

• Common applications of data in the classroom
  – Identifying norms / Patterns of central tendency
  – Are we all on the same page? / Patterns of variance
  – Solving a mystery

• Example: Leadership Beliefs
Technology Options: Out-of-Class Assessments

• Good old paper and pencil
  – Strengths: Quick / easy design, could use optical scanning
  – Weaknesses: Extra steps for data processing, copying / paper

• Web-based survey packages:
  – Examples: BlackBoard, SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, LimeSurvey
  – Strengths: Available, reliable, flexible, commercial support
  – Weaknesses: Limited default data displays, extra steps for processing

• Custom assessment centers
  – Strengths: 100% tailored to instructor goals, data displays “on the fly”
  – Weaknesses: Large upfront costs
Technology Options: In-Class Polling with Hardware (i.e., Clickers)

**Pros**
- Easy PPT integration
- Commercial support
- School / dept may support

**Cons**
- Fixed costs
- Relatively expensive
- Lug devices around
- Time handing out devices

Examples: [Turning Technologies](https://www.turningtechnologies.com), [iRespond](https://irespond.com)
Technology Options: In-Class Polling with Software

Examples
- Poll Everywhere
- LectureTools
- Most web-based survey packages:
  - BlackBoard
  - SurveyMonkey
  - Qualtrics
  - LimeSurvey

Pros
- Range of price points
- Variable cost structure
- Minimal in-class setup time
- Very flexible and expandable

Cons
- Very flexible – lots of options
- Students must bring devices
• How might polls or assessments add value to the specific courses that you teach?

• What barriers do you see to actually using polls or assessments in the future?