

Classroom Interactivity



Lisa Williams

Course: LAWS30601 Drugs and Society

Course Details: UG/Year 1/40+



What teaching and learning problem were you aiming to solve?

The course particularly lends itself to canvassing students' views and experiences in relation to drugs. However, in a lecture setting, many might feel inhibited admitting to drug use or to a particular view about how drugs should be addressed in front of their peers. The Turning Point technology (clicker and ResponseWare) allows complete anonymity. Further, trying to aggregate responses by counting hands raised is especially challenging. The technology allows precise calculation.

How did the technology help you to solve the problem?

In the first lecture, I attempt to debunk the myths that many hold about drug use, providing true or false statements and asking students to indicate their answers using the technology. Invariably, they are wrong and clearly hold myths about drug taking. In other lectures, I examine trends and patterns in drug taking. I ask students similar questions to national surveys to gauge the extent

of their use. Without the anonymity of the technology it is unlikely students would report their drug taking honestly.

How successful was the solution?

Expected benefits: Being able to get a more precise calculation of the different myths students hold in relation to drug taking and the extent of their drug taking.

Actual benefits: The expected benefits materialised. The results displayed in the lecture also provide a point to debate or for students to ask questions, as well as a space to provide evidence to show why their understanding is correct or wrong. The data can be analysed in class by gender or any other appropriate variables. This is particularly illuminating, allowing us to see differences in drug taking. The results can then be compared with national data and students are encouraged to discuss why their results might be different. This detailed analysis wouldn't be possible without the technology. It also allows students to evaluate their own experiences and attitudes compared to others in the group.

What did your students think?

Students love using this technology! I use them in a number of lectures for this course and other courses. Often they are disappointed when I don't always use them. There is always a collective groan when they get the answer wrong, which helps liven up the lecture and keeps students engaged.

Students have provided the following feedback:

"I enjoyed the clicky quiz things, eases you into a lecture. Got pretty sad when they stopped tbh"

"Really engaging lecturer, really interactive form of learning - with the live statistics on the class."

"The inclusion of the ResponseWare question/answers was interesting and made the lectures exciting. It was good to be able to see how other people felt about certain issues and allowed me to see how different people's opinions really are on topics that don't seem too controversial."

"Her interactive teaching style of data analysis using multiple choice questions made the Thursday morning lectures very stimulating."

Any tips?

I use these for other courses. They're particularly useful for revision lectures. I pose multiple choice questions to check their understanding on a topic and then discuss/correct their understanding as necessary.

