

Brown Bag: Student Engagement

Key take-aways and suggestions

Participants' experience:

- 57% taught in the fall and spring term,
- 7% will be teaching in the summer but not yet taught remotely,
- 29% will be teaching in the fall term and have not taught remotely and,
- 7% have not taught remotely and have no plans to do so.

General suggestions for engaging students

- Have students take charge of some of the classes in form of group presentations helps them to be in touch with the content of the class.
- Give real time feedback in the chat after each presentation help to give an evaluation to the students. In order not to distract them from the class make the real time evaluation/feedback nice and short.
- Hold an after-class discussion to give the students the opportunity to ask question they might have not asked during the class and help with enhancing conversations with the professor with more focus on the class topic.
 - Useful for guest speakers as well—students can spend the last 15 minutes asking questions directly to the guest speaker.
- Aim for less presentation time more discussion time with the students helps to make the class very interactive and engaging. Pre-record presentations and then use synchronous time to discuss.

Strategies for breakout rooms

- It was noted that pre-assigned breakout rooms doesn't seem to work really well on zoom, but this might change with subsequent updates on zoom. There are problems when students log in with a non-McGill email address or when they are late because they are not placed in their pre-assigned groups.
- Real time assignment of students and participants to specific breakout rooms works better with the help of a course assistant who can arrange the logistics of the breakout rooms. This also helps avoid awkward silences while the instructor is doing the assignments.
- However, even without a TA, assigning participants to specific groups doesn't seem to take too long.
 - a. For example, with 25 participants it takes less than 2 mins and with about 50 participants it should take about 4 mins.
- Participants typically can't move themselves from room to room on their own, but you can reshuffle them yourself. If you make everyone a co-host, they can move from room to room on their own. This works best with smaller groups or when you really know your students better.
- How do we get slides or instructions from the main session into the breakout rooms?
 - A few slides can be shared before each class with instructions for activities in the breakout room session. If instructors do not want to share their slides, they can

have a working office 365 document with instructions on what the breakout room exercise is all about which the students can have access to as they go into their breakout room.

- Use the “broadcast a message to all rooms” to remind students of instructions while in the breakout rooms.
- Instructors moving from one breakout room to another breaks the transition in the discussion among students; how can we not let that happen?
 - Warn students when you are leaving.
 - Don’t go into the breakout rooms but ask students to perform an activity and report back on in the main session.

How do you work with students on different time zones- Asynchronous learning?

- Use of video recordings to have students introduce themselves or share interesting facts about themselves. These videos can be used to make a “scavenger hunt” style activity, where students have to watch each other’s videos to mark off items on the list. This activity helps students get to know one another and builds community.
- Create a Facebook group specifically for students in your class and monitored by TAs. Students tend to interact more freely in this platform than on myCourses. (This should be optional, as not all students have Facebook.)
- Use Teams or MyCourses discussion board to bring about an asynchronous interaction, where students can share files and respond to one another despite time zone differences.

Assessment of participation on Zoom.

- Assign a small report on a case or topic which would be submitted before on myCourses, then discussed in the next class helps to increase participation and balance out students who barely speak in class.
- MyCourses discussion board is a great way to assess participation. Make sure students know it is part of their participation grade (and therefore participation on the board is mandatory). Ask them to give responses to a topic and respond to their peers’ comments; this helps increase student-student interaction.
- Discussion board can be used for students who cannot attend synchronous classes.
- Assess participation by counting either verbal contributions or text contributions (in the chat). Make sure to save the chat at the end of each class to keep track of who said what.
- Select 10 different students every class to be responsible for answering questions (either verbally or in the chat).
- During class, ask students to use the hand raise feature when they want to make a comment or participate. The hand raise feature keeps track of the order of who raised their hand first. However, note that co-hosts do not have the hand-raise feature.