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Increasing the levels of Interaction among multicultural students using technology

By Dr Samantha Buxton

Introduction

Increasingly we are seeing a number of things from the student cohorts regardless of nationality. These are:

1. Large class sizes.
2. A lack of engagement within the lectures & seminars regardless of size.
3. An increased need and expectation from students to move away from the traditional lecture style.

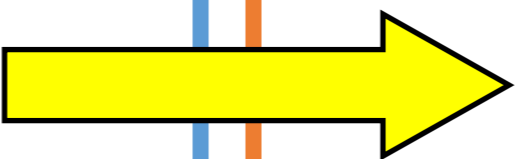


In my teaching I have been conducting some exploratory research using a variety of different types of technology to increase engagement and interaction in the lectures while still being able to deliver the required content.

I previously used clickers, however I found there was a lack of engagement for a number of reasons:

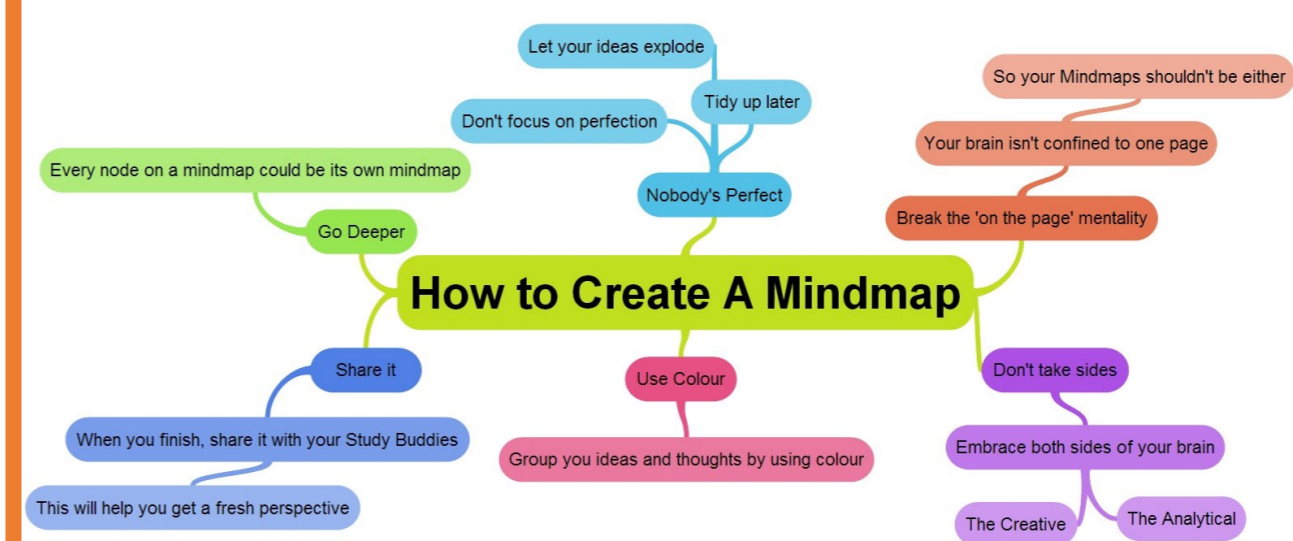
1. With the small clickers students were unable to write what they wanted easily.
2. They could be identified and so answers were not anonymous.
3. It was difficult to engage if they forgot their clicker. As this was an additional item most students frequently forgot them.

I found 2 different pieces of software that I feel is able to engage students within lectures and seminar. These are Slido and GoConqr.



Go Conqr

This is an excellent tool for creating mind maps so students can create engaging alternatives to traditional lecture notes. They are also good when engaging students in class as they allow students to easily see links which may not be evident without the use of a mind map.

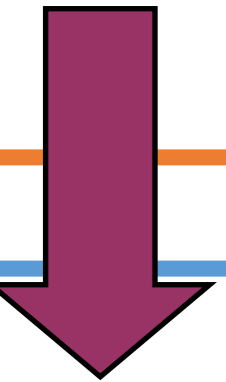


International students find these fun and easy to use because it allows them to see relationships.

They are also fun and engaging especially when used during group work and passed around so students can continue to add about a specific topic.

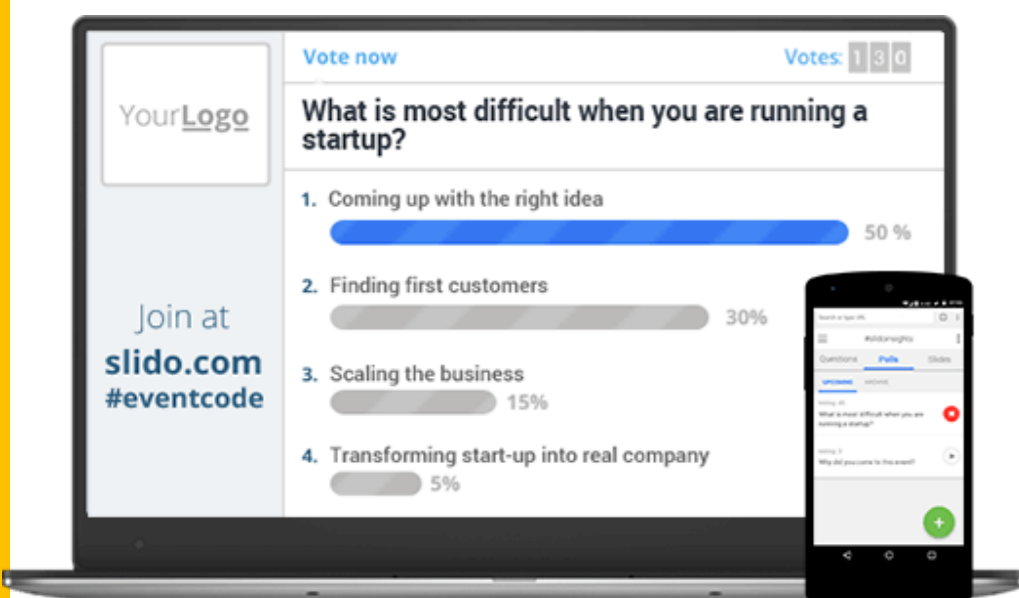
Goconqr also allows the creation of slide sets, flash cards quizzes and flow charts. All of which are useful when engaging students in class or aiding them in revision.

There is also other software available such as Coggle and this allows for more collaborative mind maps and does require further investigation as part of the research. Rating criteria will need to be defined.



Slido

Slido = audience interaction made easy!



Slido offers interactive Q & A, live polls, ratings and word clouds. This is similar to clickers however the key point is it is anonymous. Students can't be identified, so they can ask any questions without feeling like they will be singled out.

The first step was to undertake a comparison of slido with the option already available to me within my department which was Turningpoint Clicker technology. Table 1 below shows the basic comparison between the two technologies

	Clickers	Slido
Pre-install Software	Yes – staff have to have the software on the computer plus a USB stick.	No – can log on via the computer easily
Additional to something they would usually keep track of	Yes – but they can use their phone if they register and sign in.	No – just uses mobile phones, laptops or I-pads.
Automatic analytics	No	Yes – some basic analytics with the free version however more in depth analytics if you upgrade to an educational package.
Live Q & A with presenter	Yes – can ask questions while the presenter is talking and then can be addressed by the presenter	Yes – can ask questions while the presenter is talking and then can be addressed by the presenter
Word cloud option	No	Yes – converts word options into a word cloud
Requires an account for responders	Yes	No
Anonymous for responder	No (clicker is linked to person or if using a phone they have to register and sign in each time)	Yes – no personal data of the students is collected

Table 1: Comparison between clickers and slido

After running a comparison between slido and clickers it was found that on average 10% more students engaged with slido than clickers.

This data was gathered from large class sizes 40+. When using for smaller class sizes students did not engage. I think this was because they felt more comfortable engaging with the lecturer in smaller groups.

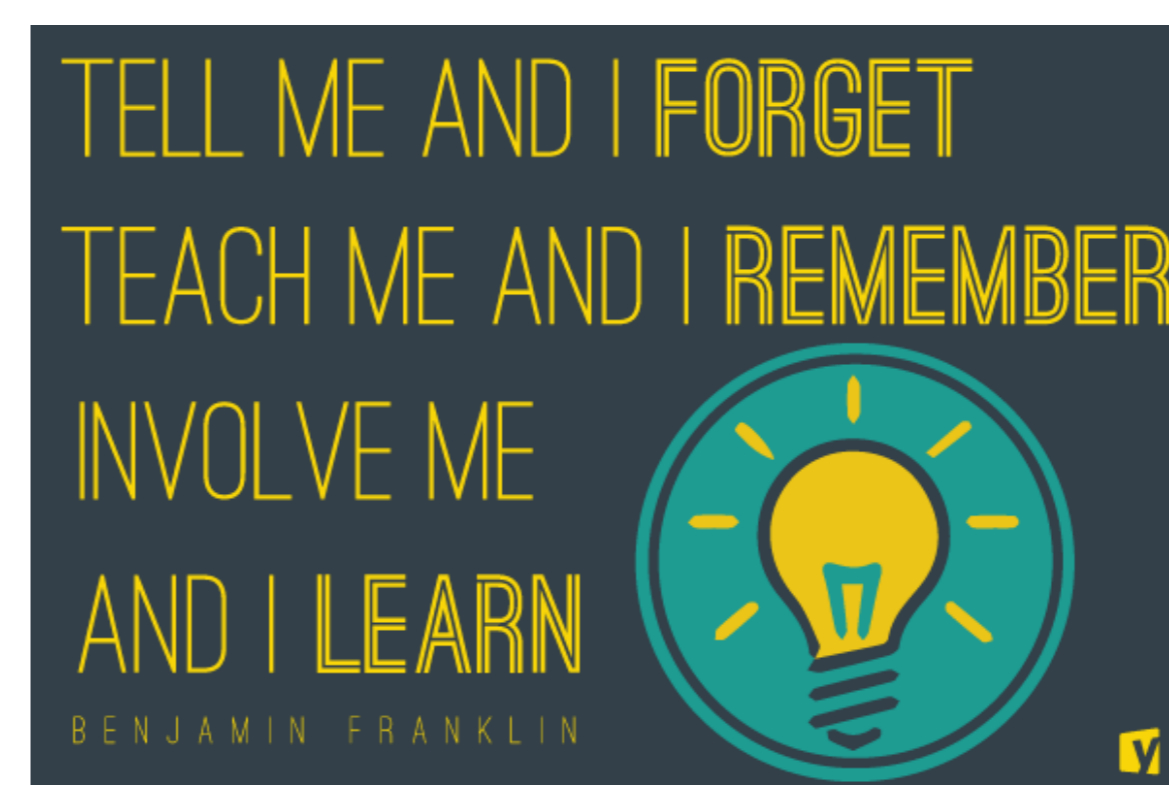


Conclusion

There is a great deal of other software available to lecturers such as Kahoot, Glisser, PollEverywhere. The next steps for the research:

1. It will involve doing a more in-depth comparison of the variety of interactive software available to lecturers including what increased functionality is available if upgrades are purchased by the lecturer or department/university. The idea will be to rate them using the criteria in table 1 as a basis to determine which is the best for engagement in large lectures.
2. Including previous literature on the level of engagement
3. Collecting more robust data to prove conclusions about the level of interaction when software is used versus when it is not. Equally engagement comparisons between different types of software should also be undertaken.
4. Investigate the different types of mind map software available and create a comparison as to which is the best using pre-defined rating criteria.

This was meant to be an interactive session showing how to use the two types of software rather than a poster. If you would like more information about these pieces of software please ask.



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