

Engaging Students Online with Mentimeter

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"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." Benjamin Franklin

Let's face it, as challenging as it was to keep students engaged when we had them in a physical classroom, it has now become magnified in our current asynchronous teaching environment.

Like many other professors, the question "How do I keep my students engaged?" is always top of mind. I constantly tried different methods, from discussion boards, to Padlet, to Kahoot, just to name a few. However, a more recent technology that Seneca has provided to us has made a noticeably positive impact on student engagement in my virtual classroom.

I first experienced Mentimeter as an attendee at a Hospitality Financial Technology Professional Association (HFTP) conference in New York in 2018, where the keynote presentation was conducted using Mentimeter. What I remember most about the presentation was how fully engaged I was during the one-hour session. I thought about how awesome it would be if I afforded my students the same opportunity to benefit as a result of me using this outstanding technology in the classroom.

Two years later, I was thrilled to see the introduction of Mentimeter at Seneca. We know that advances in technology over time have improved asynchronous learning and to make this student-centred approach increasingly effective. As new technologies have been developed and adopted by educators practicing asynchronous teaching, the experience has become much more valuable. This has resulted in fewer barriers and more rewards for students and educators alike.

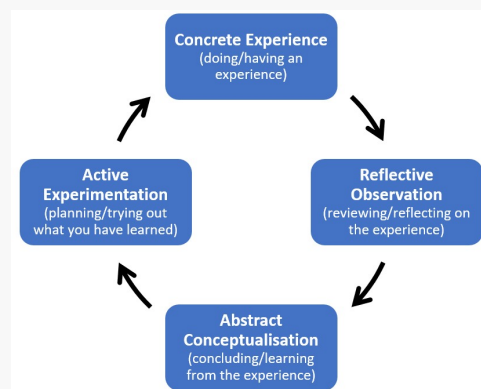
In this short article, I write about how using Mentimeter in my teaching practice helped me to revitalize and breathe new life into the asynchronous learning environment.

How I have created an effective and engaging asynchronous learning environment for my students.

Research shows that students who engage in deep learning avoid memorization and instead learn new knowledge and skills by processing their lectures, readings, and other experiences (Bain, 2012; Marton & Säljö, 1976).

We can create more profound and more durable learning if we intentionally develop learning activities to follow the learning cycle proposed by Kolb (1985) and Zull (2002).

The Experiential Learning Cycle



As I consider the kinds of experiences students will have in my courses, I deliberately select asynchronous activities that will deepen their learning. While it is not necessary to include every step, the more stages of the cycle we can include, the more enduring the learning will be.

Some examples of asynchronous teaching activities that have proven successful for me have tended to exhibit a consistent set of characteristics. The three types of characteristics are listed below:

1. The need for the educator to act as an active facilitator. Facilitators must work diligently to guide, monitor, and nurture discussions continuously to keep the lesson on the right path.
2. A shift in role for the educator from a professor who distributes knowledge to the students to a facilitator who encourages a vibrant relationship between group members that encourages learning through group interaction.
3. One that encourages enjoyment and curiosity! Facilitators who build a certain amount of play into their programme encourage social interaction within their group, which in my opinion is where students reap the greatest benefit.

5 ways Mentimeter can help engage in asynchronous learning

There are a number of Mentimeter features that support asynchronous teaching and

learning. Here are five that resonate with me.

1. Interactive slides with media support

What makes this tool so engaging for me is that once I import my PowerPoint slides, I can add the extra interactive slides within the presentation. You can also import Keynote and Google Slides presentations to add that extra interactive flair to your slide decks.

The most useful features are the selection of slide types that facilitate real-time interaction with the content of the slides from the audience. Students can use either a smart device or their computer, and can ask and answer questions, work collaboratively to create word clouds, or take part in quizzes. For the visual learners, we know that words just aren't enough and showing an image, video, or gif can really enhance and support the content being presented. With this tool, you can add an image or gif on any slide. In addition, the Video slide type enables you to upload YouTube video clips throughout your presentation.

All the information is visually represented on screen in a number of formats from which you can choose, including pie charts, bar charts, distributed dots, and more. These engaging interactive and collaborative tools can be used to assess student knowledge, reinforce learning in an engaging way, or just to present a concept for the first time in a way that is refreshing.

2. Audience pace slides for asynchronous teaching and learning

Once I finish creating my Mentimeter, I choose the option to set the presentation to "audience pace." This feature allows me to display questions and surveys ahead of time and permits students to engage with them at their own pace.

3. Link 'n Learn

Instead of presenting my Mentimeter in the moment and teaching the class in a synchronistic way, I share the link to my interactive presentation with my students via Learn@Seneca. This allows my students to engage with it and learn wherever and whenever this works for them.

4. Keep on learning

This is a specific function of Mentimeter that can be utilized in an asynchronous learning environment which allows students to engage multiple times with the presentation. This also allows students to return to the slides again and again as they learn, enabling them to modify their answers as their understanding increases.

5. Trends over time

If you love data like I do, you will also enjoy the **historical data feature**. This allows you to access information about previous sessions and view different responses over time to identify trends in the responses.

I have used this feature to track my students' progress, monitor changes between different cohorts of students, and even monitor my own performance by tracking how employing different approaches produces different results. This data is saved automatically and you can view it in your presentations, as well as download it in Excel format for further analysis.

After using Mentimeter in my courses, I find that it supports the all-important cycle for successful asynchronous teaching and learning, helping to facilitate both student-content interaction and student-professor interaction, making it an essential tool for asynchronous teaching.

Mentimeter has enhanced the asynchronous learning experience for the students in my courses, as this platform goes well beyond a standard presentation. It engages and encourages collaboration between students, which ultimately assists in maintaining a feeling of community no matter where they are in the world, while fostering a sense of togetherness for students who may otherwise feel alone during online learning.

Learn more about Mentimeter at Seneca:

- **Mentimeter*** in the Educational Technology Tool Finder
- Mentimeter training session for Seneca:



- Mentimeter 10-minute overview from *Advancing Learning 2021*:



And here are some videos on **using Mentimeter** in an online learning environment from Mentimeter.

References

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