

Top Tips for informal light touch evaluation with students and closing the feedback loop in an online environment

This short guide provides some tips and tools for evaluating Autumn Term teaching and closing the feedback loop.

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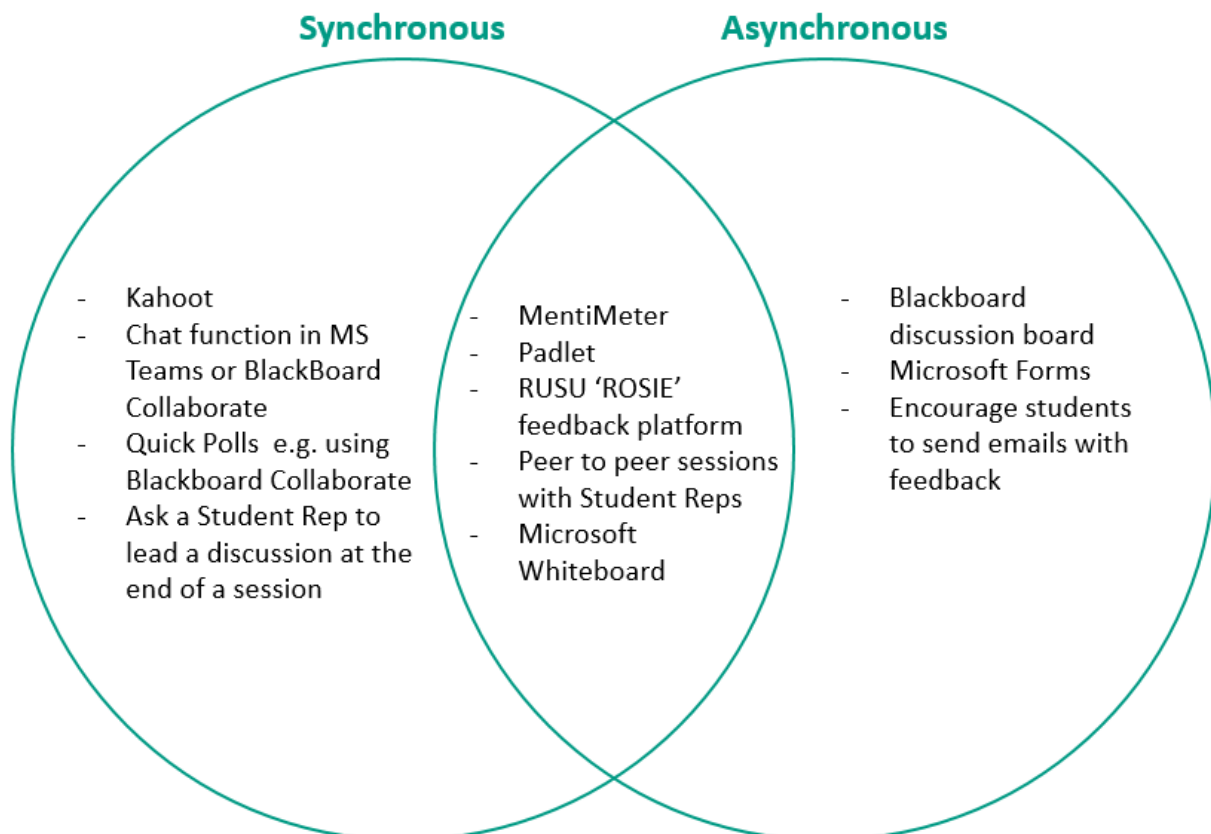
Tips

1. **Plan evaluation across the Autumn Term deciding what you will want to find out and when.** Set dates for gathering feedback and share these with students in advance. This is critical to ensure you allow sufficient time and are prepared to adapt material based on your student feedback. This template may help you to plan: [Planning and Evaluating Template for Autumn Term](#). For consistency and to build cohort cohesion, as a Programme Team you may want to agree on something similar across students' modules.
2. **Only ask about things you can change.** For example, there is little point gathering student feedback regarding module content if you have already designed your content and will not be able to adapt it.
3. **Ensure you plan for the diversity within your cohort.** Make sure your plans are accessible and will not create barriers to engagement for individuals or groups of students. For example, ensure you plan for students based on campus and remote students.
4. **Make more continuous use of mid-module feedback (mid-module +).** The purpose of informal feedback is to allow agile response in real-time. This allows you to spend more time responding to feedback rather than reporting on it. Having more frequent points to check-in with your students helps build cohesion, allows you to adapt across the term and gives you the opportunity to close the feedback loop regularly. See '[Conversation Starters](#)' for a suggested structure to this.
5. **Consider simple evaluation tools and setting aside time within your interactive sessions to work as a group and share feedback.** For example, allowing 5 minutes at the end of an interactive session for "live chat" can allow for an informal conversation about the module. Alternatively, setting up a Padlet allows for questions/feedback to be made anonymously, your response can be tailored, and students can see if their questions/feedback has already been asked by peers. See '[Tools](#)' for more methods you could use.
6. **Ensure that you respond to students in a timely and accessible manner.** As a programme/school you may decide a minimum response time to be applied consistently across modules.

7. **Decide how you are going to close the feedback loop to students and sign-post this in advance as well as after you have responded.** Ideas for responding might include making a short screencast, using [‘Together We Have’ templates](#), preparing a PowerPoint slide, or using the Blackboard “announcements” functionality. A consistent mechanism could be adopted across your school/programme to reduce confusion among your students. For example, see section 8 of the [Blackboard Threshold Standards](#). [More on Closing the Feedback Loop](#).
8. **Be honest with your students if you are not able to accommodate their requests/ideas.** There are often many reasons we can’t always accommodate student’s request. Being honest about these helps overcome student frustration around this.
9. **Be aware of the broader support which is available for your students beyond your module.** You are quite likely to receive feedback on areas beyond your control. Be prepared to help students with these issues and signpost them to areas which can provide the solutions for them such as Academic Tutoring, Study Advice and Disability Advisory Services. [More on support](#).

Tools for Gathering Student Feedback

It is usually best to use tools you are familiar with, for example, Padlet, Microsoft Whiteboard, MentiMeter and the Chat function within Microsoft Teams or Blackboard Collaborate. Consider anonymity and choosing a platform which can allow this. Some students may feel uncomfortable feeding back unless they can do so anonymously. When evaluating as part of synchronous delivery, if you are able to, consider responding in the moment. If not, plan how and when you can close the feedback loop. Some more great evaluation tools and how they are suited towards Synchronous or Asynchronous delivery are shown below:



Please note, some of the platforms above have free and ‘paid for’ versions. The University does not currently have a paid subscription to Padlet, MentiMeter or Kahoot, and does not provide support for these platforms.

Conversation Starters

It can help to encourage engagement by prompting conversation about relevant topics throughout the term. You could follow the suggested structure but are welcome to adapt this as you see fit. For example, you could instead make evaluation part of student's learning process by asking them to create a reflective diary.

Please note, 'Check in' points could be existing opportunities you have to speak to your students and do not need to be new opportunities. You can also highlight the opportunity for students to feed into their Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) by providing feedback to their [Course Reps](#).

Start of term (Week 1)

- What are you hoping to get out of the module? (Understand needs)
- Which aspects of this term's teaching are you most concerned about? (Identify risks and plan for these)
- How would you best like to feedback across the term? (Set shared expectations and amend your evaluation plan based on this)

Check ins regularly (Week 3 + Week 5 + Week 7/8)

- **Close the feedback loop**
- What's working well for you?
- What needs to stop/continue/change?
- (One topical question- e.g. threshold concept/assessment/support etc.)

End of term (Week 9)

- Is there anything you feel I should feed-forward to convenors of your Spring Term modules? (Have a joined-up programme-level approach)
- Reminder for students to complete end of module feedback
- Chance to further close the feedback loop