

# Enhancing Building Community with Technology

## WITHIN GROUP

### CHALLENGES

- Teachers need some way to gather an accurate overview of the changing needs and situations of students in the class to better support them.
- Teachers have difficulty managing the process of regularly gathering and responding to student concerns and interests.
- Teachers need a way to encourage more students to participate in discussions even when they are not comfortable speaking out.

### SOLUTIONS

- Polling software and digital assessment tools enable students to share ideas, questions, concerns, and more at varying levels of anonymity while making it easier for the teacher to collect and review responses.
- Polling software and digital assessment tools can encourage shy or reticent students to participate in discussions in a less visible way.
- Polling software and digital assessment tools can facilitate a broader and more inclusive discussion, involving more than the confident few.
- Word clouds allow the teacher to gauge the mood of the class and easily and visually identify prevailing interests, themes, or emotions.

## WITHIN GROUP (continued)

### DIGITAL APPROACHES

- ➔ Help students to share concerns and questions privately.
  - » Teachers can share questions such as “What is on your mind today?” or “What did you have for breakfast?” with the class either digitally (e.g., using an LMS) or on the board and students can answer digitally to varying degrees of anonymity, set by the teacher (e.g., anonymous from other students but not from the teacher or entirely anonymous).
- ➔ Encourage increased student participation in discussions.
  - » Teachers can pair ideas or content with thinking routines such as guiding questions (e.g., “What do you see, what do you think, and what do you wonder?” [Ritchhart, Church, and Morrison 2011]), to which students can respond digitally. Teachers can use these responses to guide their moderation of future discussion and bring otherwise quiet students into the conversation or use these responses for future assessment and planning.
- ➔ Identify prevailing themes, understandings, and questions.
  - » Students can respond to questions such as “Which three words best describe your feelings about \_\_\_?” or “Pick \_\_\_ adjectives to describe this character” by creating a word cloud. Frequency of response is reflected in the size of the words in the cloud (i.e., if several students respond with the same word, it will be bigger than other words), giving the teacher and, if desired, the students a visual overview of the group’s responses.

### DIGITAL TOOLS

- ➔ Polling software and digital assessment tools:
  - » Google Forms
  - » Mentimeter
  - » Plickers
  - » Poll Everywhere
  - » Socrative
  - » Verso Learning
- ➔ Collaborative word cloud tools:
  - » Mentimeter
  - » Poll Everywhere

## BETWEEN GROUPS

### CHALLENGES

- It's hard for teachers to find suitable time and space for students from different groups, who may be on different schedules, to collaborate.

### SOLUTIONS

- Students from different groups (e.g., ability level, grade, class, subject) can collaborate asynchronously, using online tools such as digital classrooms, digital learning journals, or online bulletin boards.
- Older, sufficiently responsible students from different groups can collaborate using group-enabled video-calling software at a time and place that is convenient for them.

### DIGITAL APPROACHES

- Facilitate asynchronous digital collaboration.
  - » Students can make video or audio recordings for each other, to be reviewed and responded to at a later time. For example, they can read aloud to each other, explain or peer teach ideas and skills, and respond to or pose questions about topics.
  - » Students can share ongoing work, such as typed documents or other digital projects, for asynchronous collaboration.
  - » Students can leave typed or audio comments on uploaded items in peers' digital learning journals.
- Facilitate real-time, remote digital collaboration.
  - » Students can discuss, plan, and collaborate on projects face-to-face from different classrooms or outside class time.
  - » Students can refer to and work on digital projects and products (e.g., documents or websites) through a digital classroom or other online platform.

### DIGITAL TOOLS

- Digital classroom tools:
  - » Edmodo
  - » Google Classroom
  - » Microsoft Teams
  - » Moodle
  - » Schoology
  - » Seesaw
  - » Showbie
- Online bulletin boards:
  - » Flipgrid
  - » Lino
  - » Padlet
  - » Scrumblr
  - » Wakelet
- Social media platforms:
  - » Edmodo
  - » Twiducate
  - » Twitter
- Group video calling:
  - » FaceTime
  - » Google Hangouts
  - » Skype
  - » Zoom
- Group chatting:
  - » Google Docs chat function
  - » Google Hangouts
  - » Padlet Backchannel
  - » Whatsapp

## BEYOND SCHOOL

### CHALLENGES

- It can be challenging for teachers to find safe and sustainable ways for students to have contact with peers from other cultures or communities
- Teachers may struggle to support students from diverse cultures and backgrounds in communicating and developing empathy and understanding for each other.
- Teachers often have trouble facilitating learning about topics and concepts that are not directly relevant to students' own culture and context, such as water shortage, climate, geography, and political systems.

### SOLUTIONS

- Social media allows teachers to safely connect with each other locally, nationally, and globally on behalf of students.
- Students can engage in ongoing and supported digital communication and collaboration to explore each other's perspectives and build shared understanding.
- Students from different schools in different communities or countries can act as first-person sources and resources for each other on relevant topics.

## BEYOND SCHOOL (continued)

### DIGITAL APPROACHES

- ➔ Create links with students from other cultures and communities.
  - » Using social media, such as Twitter, teachers can build a professional learning network that spans the globe.
  - » Through their PLN, teachers can make contact with other teachers around the world who would be interested in collaborating on projects and topics with their own classes.
- ➔ Support students in developing understanding and empathy for peers from different cultures, communities, and contexts.
  - » Students can communicate with peers from other communities, neighborhoods, cities, or countries through teacher-moderated blogs and websites, through email newsletters, as online pen pals, or through digital learning journals.
  - » Using these tools, they can share their day-to-day experiences through videos, photos, and text.
  - » Students can communicate directly, respond to each other, and ask questions to understand each other's perspectives and differing experiences.
- ➔ Facilitate collaboration on projects of shared interest.
  - » Students who are learning about topics or concepts not directly relevant to their own context can communicate directly with students who have relevant experiences using social media, blogs, learning journals, or digital classrooms.
  - » Students can share photos, videos, or audio that communicates relevant ideas or information (e.g., the sounds of local wildlife, videos of traffic or weather conditions, first-person interviews).
  - » Students can act as experts, answering questions from peers in other contexts.

### DIGITAL TOOLS

- ➔ Social media:
  - » Edmodo
  - » Facebook
  - » Twiducate
  - » Twitter
- ➔ Blogging:
  - » Blogger
  - » Edublogs
  - » Kidblog
  - » Seesaw
  - » Weebly
- ➔ Digital classroom tools:
  - » Edmodo
  - » Google Classroom
  - » Microsoft Teams
  - » Moodle
  - » Schoology
  - » Seesaw
  - » Showbie