The Power of Anonymous Feedback

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1 Motivation

• Anonymity facilitates participation, creates a more equitable and safe environment for sharing views and is important for marginalised groups.
• Live, formative feedback allows the teacher to respond, provide support and take action during a course.
• Student feedback is often unidirectional; we need to close the feedback loop.

2 bluepulse taps into the power of anonymous feedback

There are different types of interactions in bluepulse:

- Select an Answer
- Rate on a Five-Point Scale
- Type an Open-Ended Response

3 Does anonymous feedback work? Does bluepulse work?

Anonymous feedback:
- facilitates truthful, frank communication
- reduces student concern over reprisal
- gives quiet or marginalised students a voice
- avoids group pressure from peers
- creates a safe environment for sharing critical views
- makes it easier to close the feedback loop
- encourages participation
- requires trust

but only some SBS staff participated:
- new technology
- yet another task
- concerns about ‘deluge’
- “dialogue already open”
- critical feedback unwelcome

School of Biological Sciences (SBS) did a 1-year trial of bluepulse

SBS trial in numbers

- course levels used: 1 2 3 4 5
- staff ➤ student # Qs: 123
- # students responses: 21%
- # follow-ups ➤ students: 120
- confidential spontaneous posts from students: 59
- median ‘value’ of bluepulse to students*: 4/5

*based on n=19 responses on one course (see above)