HOW TO USE POLLS

Some videoconferencing services include a polling feature which is extremely useful in kicking off, or wrapping up, a discussion topic.

Polling allows you to inject a note of suspense at the beginning of a discussion by posing a provocative question. Such questions are generally interesting to students—do they stand with the majority or minority?—and will help you to gauge your students' understanding of the material.

Poll results can give you a good sense of where students are with the material, which can help you steer the discussion more effectively. Consider following the poll with a low-stakes conversation starter: "Would someone who answered "yes" volunteer to explain their thinking?"

For faculty using cases to teach quantitative methods, in particular, polling offers a quick and powerful measure of how well students are able to apply theoretical concepts in real-life contexts.

If poll results show your class is very split, students might benefit from a small group discussion or class-wide discussion/debate.

If you anticipate that, as a result of the small group or class discussion, students might change their mind on the polling questions, consider doing a before and after poll.

POLLING IN ZOOM

If Zoom is your videoconference tool, the platform includes a simple multiple choice polling option. Although there are several polling applications that offer more capabilities than Zoom, they may raise challenges. Using them alongside Zoom or other videoconferencing services requires students to visit an external site to answer the poll. The downside of an external polling app is that it adds yet another technology for students to juggle, on top of managing multiple windows.

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