UBC Pilot Evaluation Outcomes



During the 2017/18 academic year, UBC piloted the **open-source team chat tool Mattermost** & collected feedback at the end of each term from participants in multiple, cross-discipline courses.

Using pilot outcomes from...

11 Courses

8Instructors & TAs

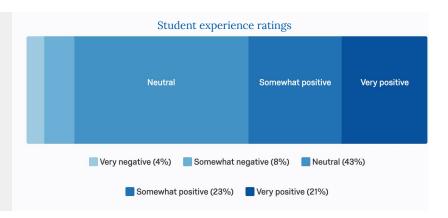
202 Students

...the evaluation team found:

UBC

Most students rated their overall experience as neutral or positive.

Students & instructors shared pros & cons of the tool that resulted in the following recommendations for maximizing pedagogical effectiveness of Mattermost.



✓ Recommendations for Effective Course Use of Mattermost

Set up some channels for smaller groups (10-30) of students

Help students feel they can meaningfully contribute & interact without being drowned out or overwhelmed by the content of too many peers.

"liked the ability to connect & chat with classmates in real time"

BUT

"it's hard when 40 people are interacting"

2 Organize content into clear channels & guide organization

Model & explain to students how best to use the different areas & features, so everyone has a shared understanding of effective communication.

"public discussions were very helpful in directing me"

"it's not easy to sort through & find what's relevant to me"

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3 Set explicit expectations around instructional team availability

Tell students how & when instructors & TAs will interact in real-time. When outside of real-time availability, indicate the length of delay.

"from the get-go, provide a schedule"

BECAUSE

"reasonable expectations of how [the instructor] sought to use it... allowed us to use the platform more, as we understood the norms around it"

Integrate with or regularly prompt use from other course site(s)

Make chat feel like an integral & useful part of the course by incorporating it into the primary course site(s), when relevant.

"if I am busy working on my course home page - I don't want to leave"

"made it more difficult to make the effort each week to check up"

5 Set loose guidelines for student participation

Decrease student stress & potential disengagement by suggesting norms other than 24/7 participation, e.g., specific times for real-time discussions, highlighting one aspect weekly, bonus marks for x amount of participation.

"helpful for quick messages regarding smaller course questions or content"

BUT

"checking it on a frequent basis makes me feel overwhelmed"

6 Emphasize private communication options for getting help

Highlight the private, 1-on-1 student-instructor/TA engagement opportunities, particularly in fully online courses.

"we could just have a quick dialogue connection & move forward" & THIS

"made me more inclined to ask questions"

Explain why Mattermost over other more established chat tools

Justify asking students to learn a new interface by explaining & educating on the importance of privacy in social media.

"goes a long way in fostering a sense of community, a struggle that is not easily overcome in online education"

BUT

"it was on yet another platform"