

Summary of Teaching & Learning Context

I teach an online Research Methods module to approximately 35 Level 9 postgraduate students on the PG Diploma in Financial Management and the PG Diploma in Quality Management and Validation.

Student engagement can be difficult in the online teaching and learning environment, especially within larger groups. Often, within the group there are students who prefer not to have their camera or microphone on, so the challenge for me teaching online is to ensure that these students are still actively participating in the activities. Because some of the concepts I teach in this module can be difficult for students to understand, I wanted to use a formative assessment tool that would allow students to respond to questions anonymously, which had the double advantage of allowing them the opportunity to engage with the material and providing me with an insight into their understanding of the concepts. I use Vevox primarily to:

- Find out what students know about a topic before I begin the class (background probe)
- Gauge understanding of a topic that I've covered, especially muddy points in a module.

Implementing the Strategy

Vevox is a classroom response / live polling system, which can be used in the traditional classroom setting or shared via the live online classroom platform, e.g., Zoom, MS Teams. Once you're logged in on <https://vevox.com>, you can create a session and start to build your questions. I use Text, Multiple Choice, Word Cloud (students' entries are displayed as a word cloud, and the size of the word relates to the frequency within student answers) and Rating questions. There are other question types, such as Numeric, X, Y plot and Pin on Image (each question type has a description, so you can find out what it does).

When the questions are set up, the lecturer can share the session ID with students. This also comes in the form of a barcode which students can scan. Students can input their answers, while the lecturer see the number of students in the top right corner. The results of the poll can then be shared on screen.

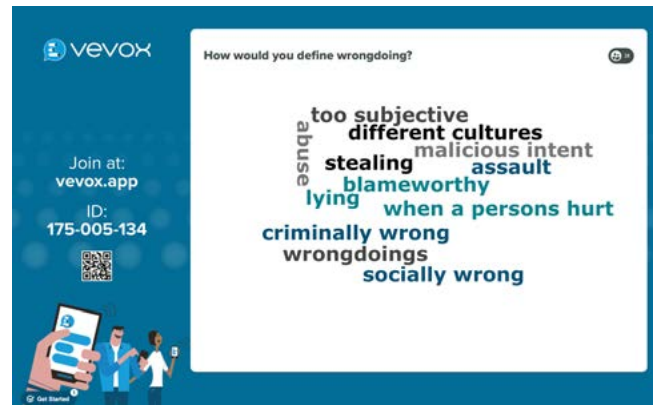


Figure 1: Screenshot of word cloud question

Observations/Reflections

Students are more inclined to provide an answer because it is anonymous. The fact that the lecturer can see how many students are answering means that he/she can encourage those who are still hesitant to input their answer. Students also find it very useful to see the answers from the group and it provides a good source of material for discussion.

The lecturer can access a report for each session, to see what the participation rate was and how the students answered the questions. This is very useful in terms of identifying areas for clarification and follow up. Finally, the lecturer can also export and import questions for re-use and sharing, as all created polls are available on the dashboard.