

A black mobile phone is shown at an angle in the top left corner. The screen displays a clock showing 12:27 and several application icons.

Using mobile phones to encourage interaction in large lectures

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“Effective learning in the Biosciences 2011”

The students' view



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Why use mobile phones?

- Most references describe negative attitudes to phones in the classroom (Campbell, 2006)

Campbell, S.W. (2006) ['Perceptions of Mobile Phones in College Classrooms: Ringing, Cheating, and Classroom Policies'](#),
Communication Education, 55: 3, pp 280-294

- BUT can be used to ask and to answer questions

- what is a textwall?
- plans and pricing
- help/support

what is a textwall?

A textwall is a web page that learners or delegates can send text messages to. The messages can then be shown on a large screen or interactive whiteboard as part of a lesson or event for everyone to see.

You are not charged for messages you receive. It costs the learner their standard sms charge to send text messages to the textwall. Depending on their phone contracts, this could be free.

sending SMS messages

A textwall can be used to compose and send bulk text messages to learners or delegates for informative, administrative or pastoral purposes.

key features

- Textwall view** - display messages on screen in real time as they are received
- SMS** - send text messages to your contacts or groups
- Inbox** - edit, delete, export and manage messages using your inbox
- Blacklist** - Prevent selected mobile numbers posting messages to your textwall
- Rude words filter** - Prevent rude words from appearing on your textwall
- Wordle** - create typographic pictures of messages sent to your textwall using wordle
- RSS** - subscribe to the RSS feed from your textwall to be notified of new messages

Text wall features

- Students can send in questions via phone or post via website (for those with laptops)
- The questions come up on the screen immediately
- Tutors can “blacklist” numbers and filter texts for “rude words”

3 easy steps....

1. Log on to <http://www.xlearn.co.uk/sms>
2. Apply on line, cost is £25 per year for one “wall”, £300 for up to 25 “walls”
3. Inform students of code and number to use, or how to access via the web

An example from a first year
module.....

Using mobile phones in the lecture theatre

Introductory Physiology



Please turn off your phone during lectures!

- ▶ The signals interfere with the sound system
- ▶ It's rude!
- ▶ HOWEVER.....SOMETIMES.....
 - You will be asked to use your phone to text to a "text wall"

- ▶ **PLEASE NOTE, we can all see your message, and although it will appear anonymous, staff can identify whose phone it has come from**

To send a message

Start a text with **intp**

And send it to 07537 402 400

**This will cost you the same as any
UK text**



<http://xlearn.co.uk/sms>

To introduce new students

“My Background in Biology is...”

I did Higher/ A level Biology

I did Standard Grade / GCSE Biology, but not Higher

I did a different Biology course at School/ college

I can't remember the last time I did Biology

Other



Feedback from students 2010

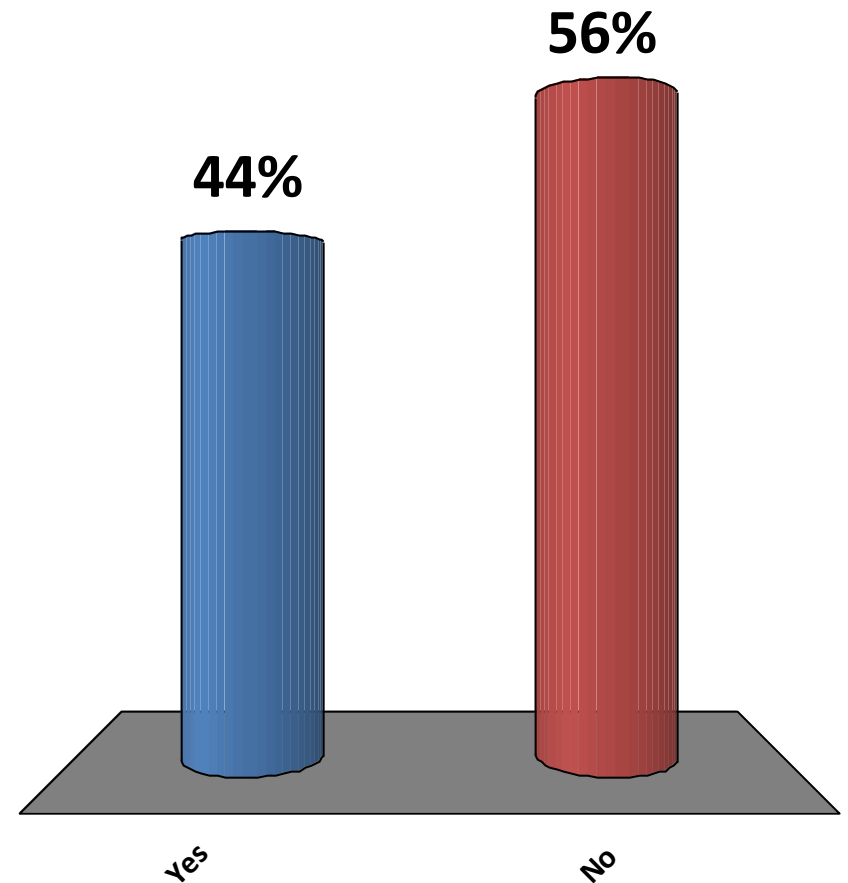
Students cohort of 200

Feedback gathered from:

1. The classroom using “Turning Point” (classroom voting) (90 responses)
2. The module evaluation questionnaire (30 responses)

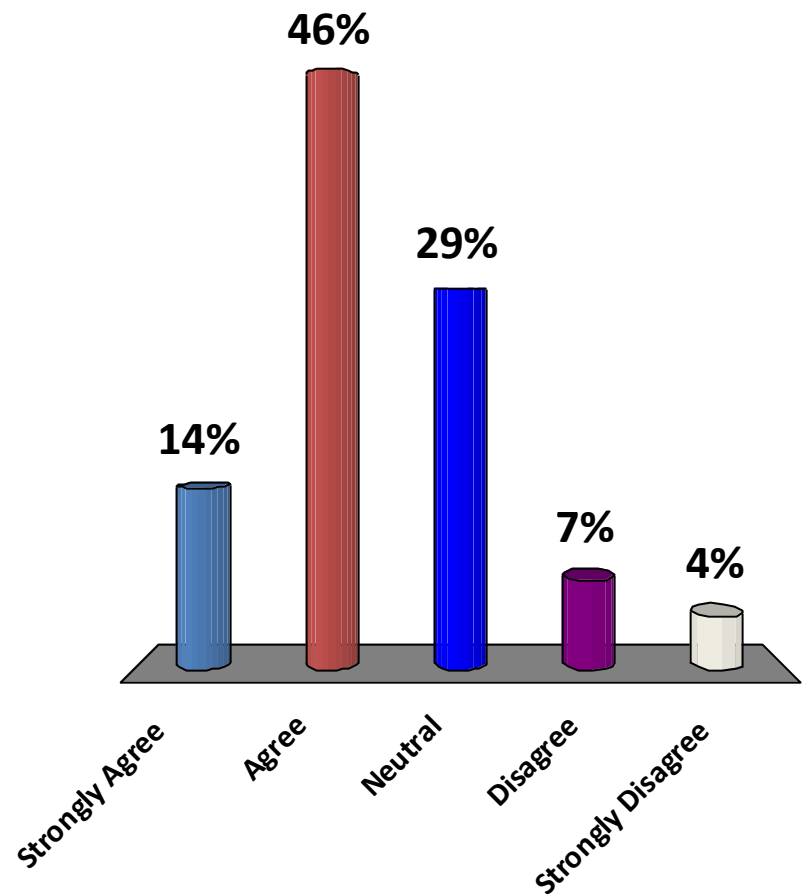
I have used the text wall in class

1. Yes
2. No



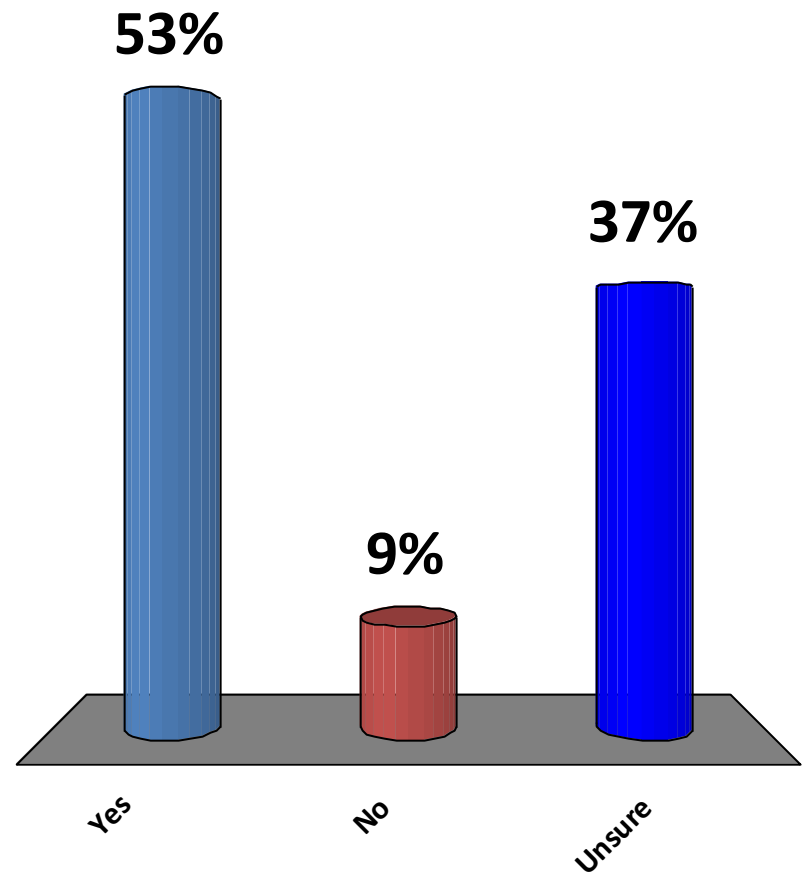
Use of the text wall in class has helped my learning

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree



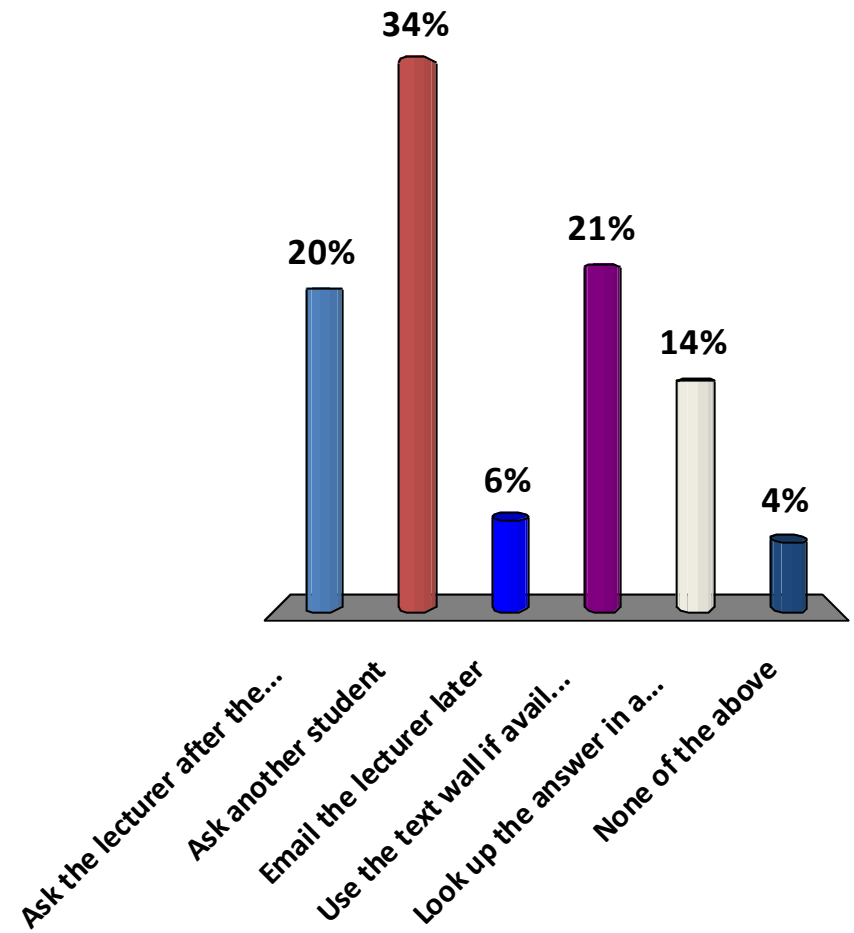
In future modules, I will use the text wall to ask questions

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure



If I want to ask a question in a lecture, I am most likely to....

1. Ask the lecturer after the class
2. Ask another student
3. Email the lecturer later
4. Use the text wall if available
5. Look up the answer in a book
6. None of the above



Module questionnaire:

Positive comments (26/30)

- I think the texting is really useful as i personally dont like to ask questions in front of a large group of people so the texting allowed me to ask questions without getting embarassed
- Texting is really useful for asking what you think is a silly question, so it works very well because generally other people are thinking the same thing.
- I think its a brilliant idea, it was definitely useful because it allows people to ask questions without feeling like they are interrupting the lecture for the other 199 people. The usefulness easily outweighs the potential negatives.

Less positive comments (4/30)

- i feel it should be done and then the serious questions should be sorted out and answered for the next lecture rather than having to go through questions that are silly.
- I didn't really find it that useful, although I think it is a good idea.
- yes/no. Silly questions were asked but on the whole helped to answer some of my own.
- Didn't work, people sent in rubbish.

In summary

- Technology can enhance the learning experience in large classes
- Use of a “text wall” is simple, cheap and effective
- The text wall can be used as an ice-breaker as well as for students to ask questions