**MG4G7: Moving peer review of essay plans online**

MG4G7 is a popular MSc elective exploring the management of advanced technologies. Students explore the management challenges of artificial intelligence and fintech (including open banking and blockchain) and produce group videos addressing particularly business pain points [link to the other piece].

The students also write an individual essay on another advanced technology. The course design includes two rounds of peer review of essay plans where students produce A3 “posters” outlining their essay ideas and plans. These posters are normally reviewed during a specialised session, with students and faculty moving between the posters offering comments, suggestions and other feedback on the essay plans at different stages of development. That is, the sessions are designed so that the students receive feedback on their research ideas, have an opportunity to see how others are approaching the essay and learn to provide actionable feedback to others.

The LSE’s move to online only teaching meant that the second peer review of posters could not be held in the normal face to face way and instead we had to shift it to an online environment.

Fortunately, for another course [see <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lti/2016/11/01/mahara-blogging-and-peer-review/> and <http://lti.lse.ac.uk/using-mahara-blogging-peer-review-and-feedback/>] I had experience of using a blogging platform as a mechanism for providing peer review (of blogs about the essay topic) by students and faculty as “comments” on the blog and so sought to adapt this to the peer review of the posters.

Students were asked to upload their posters (either the text of their poster or, literally, a photo of their handwritten poster) to the blogging platform by the time of the peer review session. These were labelled using their names and the topic of their essay (for the online session we used the students’ first name to sort the posters and mix things up in a different way to grouping by family name which we had done for the first session). Interestingly, by family name the student names this year fell into these groups: A-G, H-L, M-S, T-Z whereas by first name the split was A-E, F-J, K-P, Q-Z.

These groups were used to allocate one course teacher to each of the groups of students and they would then provide formative feedback on the posters in their group. The students were also asked to provide feedback on the “next name along” (Alice would provide feedback on Beryl etc.) and were given instructions on what good feedback looked like. They were also encouraged to remain engaged with their fellow students by optionally looking at some more posters and, even if they didn’t provide detailed feedback, leaving a brief comment to show that they had visited the poster. A list of all the submitted essay topics was circulated to the students.

Structuring the process this way proved to be incredibly effective and probably resulted in more detailed feedback comments from fellow students than the face to face process enabled. Moreover, the blogging platform notifies all those who left feedback comments when another feedback comment is made, simplifying asynchronous communications. For example, some students were in different time zones and would only wake up to see the feedback comments some time later. By communicating via comments, they were able to ask follow up points or just thank the people who had left comments.

Some students were unable to submit for the main session because they were travelling at the time, and so we simply replicated the poster process in a different blog so that we knew when they had submitted their posters for feedback.