TIPS on continuous evaluation of online courses

The end of course evaluation comes too late to make changes to a course that will benefit the current cohort. Below are some ideas how to elicit feedback from your students on your online course either on a continuous basis or mid-way through your course. This kind of feedback should be quick and easy. *Please do not give students surveys or questionnaires – they already do plenty of those.*

1. **Digital Exit Tickets**
   Find out what your students learned or found difficult by asking them to complete an exit ticket before leaving the session. The exit ticket can consist of a quiz or of one or more open-ended questions. For practical ideas of how to use Exit Tickets, please see the two resources listed in the references. Remember, you are checking your students’ learning and comprehension, not the popularity of your course.

2. **The One Minute Paper**
   At the end of the session, ask students to write for one minute, answering two questions: What was the most important thing they learned today? What was the ‘muddiest point’ (something that is still unclear)? Students can do this via the chat function in Zoom – or if the group is very large – answers can be posted on a designated area on Moodle. Another way of operating this feedback method is to ask three or four groups of students to share their one minute papers before posting a summary of results from, say, four groups. Other tools to be used for this exercise are Mentimeter (https://www.mentimeter.com) and Padlet (https://padlet.com). Padlet allows students to write, draw or upload handwriting, and can display students’ responses in ways to be followed up with different student groups.

3. **Polling**
   Use the polling function in Zoom, Mentimeter or any other platform to elicit understanding of key concepts from your students. Outcomes from the poll can be used to kick-off the following session and to iron out any misconceptions or challenges.

What questions do I ask?
Make the continuous or mid-way course evaluation about **student learning**, not student satisfaction which will be measured elsewhere.

1. If using Exit tickets or Polling with open ended questions, make sure these questions focus on areas you can change immediately. If your course is designed around PBL there is no point in asking how students feel about PBL. Instead ask questions such as “What has been your biggest challenge with PBL and what could be done to ease this challenge?”

2. Ask questions that highlight the effectiveness of your teaching **as well as** your students’ learning. This way, students get to view their feedback as part of their self-assessment. Instead of posing a question such as “How useful did you find the X-exercise?” ask “List two key learning points you took away from doing the X-exercise.”

3. Involve students in evaluating their own learning and the learning of their peers. Students can be asked to design questions for quizzes, to set a potential exam question based on your lecture or a journal article (and explain how this question helps meet specific learning outcomes), or produce and peer assess an online poster explaining a complex concept.

References:
Ditch that textbook. 10 ideas for digital exit tickets (and some analog ones too) https://ditchthattextbook.com/10-ideas-for-digital-exit-tickets-and-some-analog-ones-too/

Require online exit tickets for active engagement (University of Central Florida) https://topr.online.ucf.edu/require-online-exit-tickets-for-active-engagement/

1 The tips on continuous evaluation of online courses are extracted from the resources in the list of references.