

Yellowdig

The Efficacy E-Book

Success Stories from Faculty
and Students on Retention,
Engagement, and More

2020



Introduction

Now more than ever, learning institutions around the world are looking for creative ways to educate students with diverse needs. At Yellowdig, our technology is constantly evolving to help institutions meet these needs and create meaningful experiences. Our approach is unique because our platform focuses on driving the kind of student behavior most conducive to learning. Every element of Yellowdig is designed to build community, foster dialogue, and spark sincere engagement.

Instead of only relying on a few hours of “live” time during class lectures, Yellowdig encourages students to engage anytime, from anywhere—ensuring active and enthusiastic participation. We help schools maintain the magic of the classroom no matter where the classroom is.

We created this e-book to give readers an overview of the Yellowdig experience. Our community-driven approach has had a positive impact on student engagement, retention, course outcomes, student satisfaction, and faculty satisfaction at universities across the country.

In the coming pages, you’ll hear about Yellowdig from the people who have used it. Their campuses and student bodies all look different, but one thing they have in common is their successful use of Yellowdig in the pursuit of creating rich educational environments wherever needed.

Dig deeper with us!

Shaunak Roy
Founder & CEO

Yellowdig



The Paradigm Shift

What is Yellowdig?

Yellowdig is a digital solution that impacts the entire student lifecycle and enables rich community experiences for all students. Yellowdig isn't just a message board, it is an extension of the classroom. Yellowdig sparks meaningful conversations, tracks progress, and frees up faculty to do more of what they love.

Why are we shifting?

Students (and faculty) often regard online participation as a chore. That is because students are accustomed to doing the required posts to fulfill the graded requirement then forgetting about the forum. Yellowdig understands that real learning requires real interaction. Consumptive behaviors and comments, not posting, are most associated with better course outcomes, student satisfaction, and student persistence/retention. Yellowdig is designed to elicit the most productive behavior from students. They have a voice in online discussions and interact with their peers in ways that build real relationships.

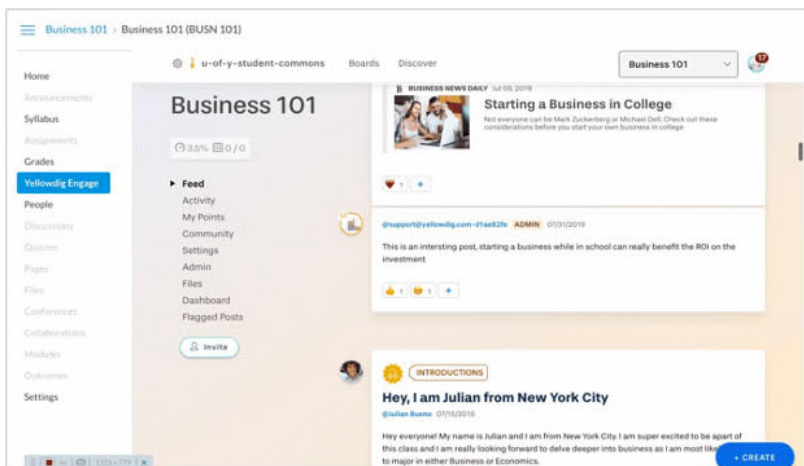
What is the Conversation Ratio?

Defined as, "The total number of comments in the course divided by the total number of posts in the course," this is one of the most important metrics faculty use to gauge the health of any online community, yet many non-Yellowdig online courses are not engineered to create these valuable interactions. Instead, many conventional communities that exist on an LMS are designed to get students to post content. This is better than nothing, but barely. When students participate in dialogues with one another they have to blend concepts and let new ideas take root—here is where the true learning occurs. Yellowdig was built as an environment where these kinds of interactions can flourish. Instructors can always consider the conversation ratio along with many other community health metrics to build stronger communities.

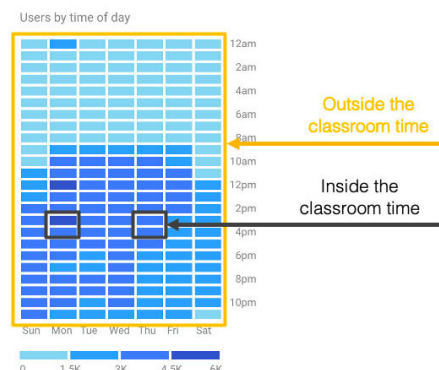
Why is Yellowdig educational?

This e-book presents several Yellowdig case studies done in collaboration with a wide range of educational institutions. Though the shape, size, and location of these colleges and universities vary considerably, the impact of Yellowdig was consistent. The platform improved student performance, decreased instructor workload, and increased retention. We want to tell some of these stories—examples of implementation and execution—in hopes that you will be inspired to use Yellowdig to create more meaningful learning environments at your institution.

Our solution: community-driven, active learning outside the classroom



Used around the clock, anytime, form anywhere



Student Engagement



Yellowdig resembles the social media platforms that college students are already so familiar with. Participants intuitively navigate the interface, and hit the ground running when it comes to interaction. However, unlike social media platforms, Yellowdig is gamified with student engagement and learning in mind. This reward system is not arbitrary. It has been designed to foster optimal student behavior in a way that dramatically improves interactions over the course of a class.

Administrators at Fort Hays State University wanted to analyze different student actions to try and understand how their students engaged with Yellowdig. The metrics chosen included individual student behaviors and interactions between multiple students.

Students were seeking new and interesting content on a daily basis and bringing it to the “classroom” with their own take on it. The integration between theory and practice came alive and students became more active learners.

The research performed by Fort Hays State University proved that when students are given more agency to participate in conversations, they enjoy using peer interaction software and it has a positive impact on the learning experience. **Instructors found that the quality of posts and comments is far higher on Yellowdig than traditional message boards.**

“Yellowdig is beautifully set up with points as a motivation system.”

- Dr. Andrew Feldstein, Fort Hays State University

Week 1

06/05

+250 **Post** with 40 Minimum Words – 06/10 02:09 PM EDT – (180 words)

+50 👍 Received – 06/10 02:10 PM EDT

+50 🤝 Received – 06/10 02:14 PM EDT

+50 🤝 Received – 06/10 02:15 PM EDT

+0 **Comment** with 20 Minimum Words – 06/10 02:25 PM EDT – (19 words)

+50 👍 Received – 06/10 03:01 PM EDT

Student Engagement

Adam Munson of University of Florida's Warrington College of Business set out to calibrate his grading to garner the largest amount of student engagement on Yellowdig. Given the size of Adam's undergraduate courses (100 - 600 students), it was important that he found a solution that could scale without incurring too much admin overhead.

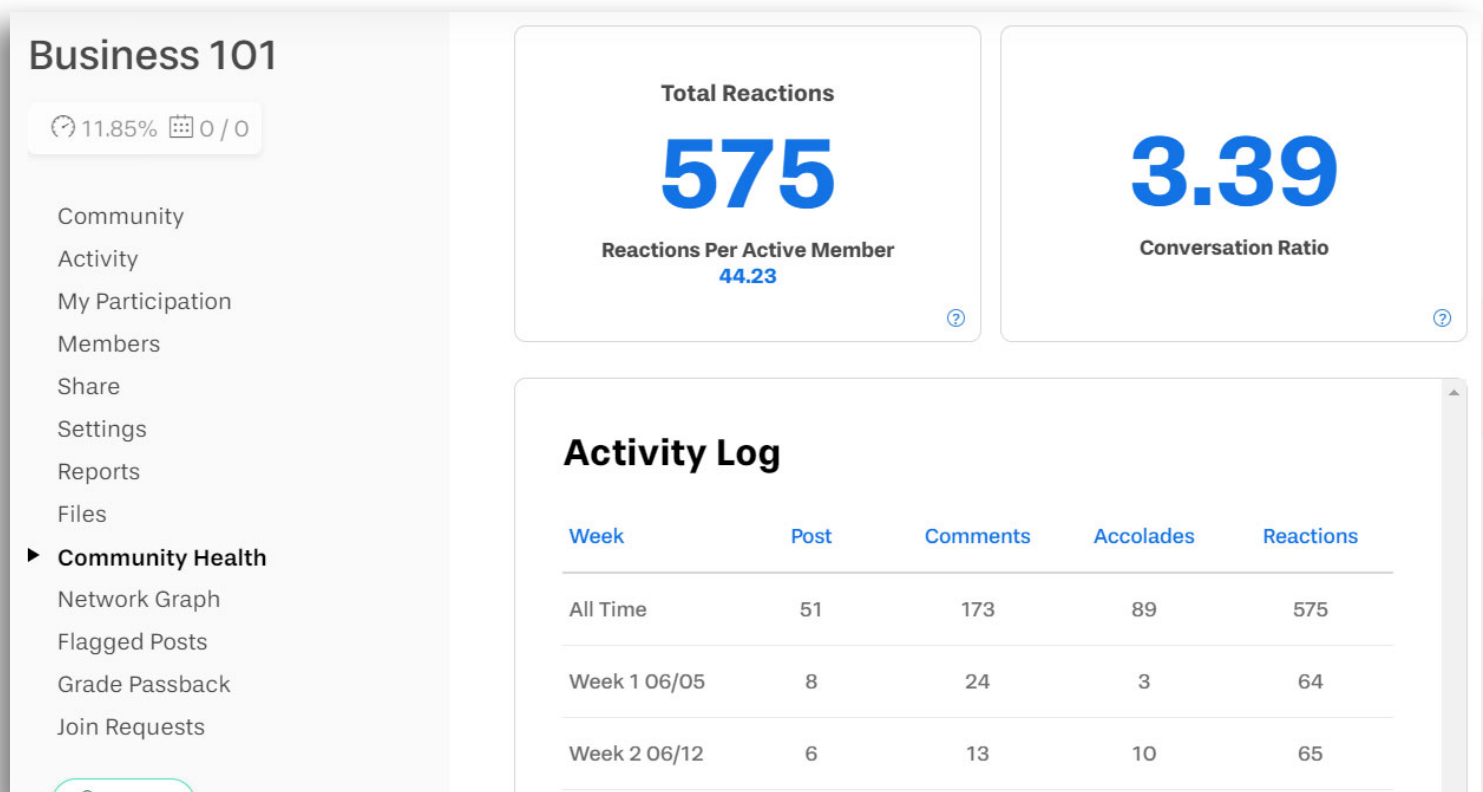
Over time he gave more points for comments instead of posts, which increased the important conversation ratio. He also started taking advantage of the comments-on-posts point type in Fall 2017, when that feature was added. These small point changes caused the amount of comments on a post to increase by 1,500% and resulted in the class exceeding its course goal by 23%.

When students can earn social points they create posts earlier to get a discussion going and engage other students. The social points Adam gave helped kick-start good conversations. Students no longer posted just to get a post done, but to spark real conversations.

Yellowdig communities that use all of our point categories have more engaged students who are more likely to post despite having already achieved the point goal.

"By examining participation we see our relationship to 'content'...as part of a shared practice and cultural belonging, not as a process of individual 'internalization'."

- Jenkins and Ito, 2015, P. 4



Retention

with Arizona State University

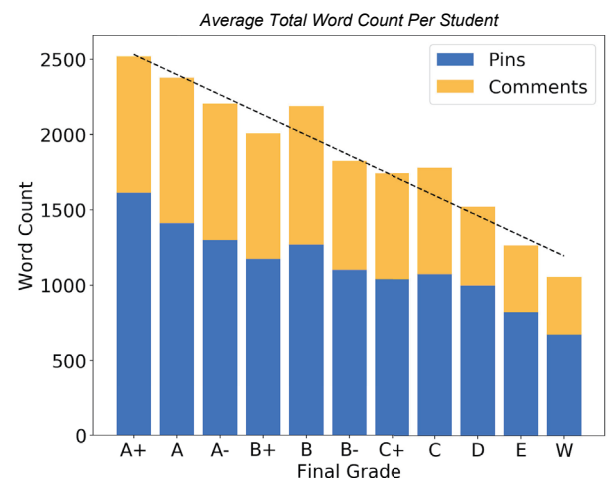
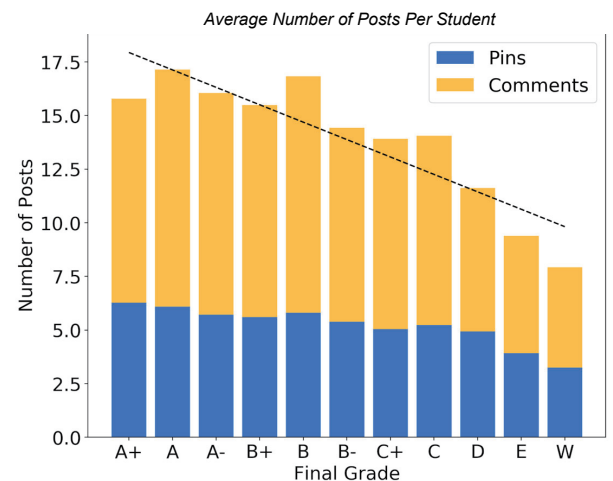
Arizona State University wanted to use Yellowdig to create more interactive, engaging, and satisfying learning environments outside of the classroom. One of the things they wanted to know was how our kind of online experience would impact retention. Though having a better experience has benefits in its own right, it is important to know whether interacting and engaging translates to actual learning and student retention.

ASU discovered that students who participated on the Yellowdig platform were more likely to complete the course and get a higher overall grade. The majority of students using Yellowdig achieved their course goal for points, with the top 25% of point earners exceeding expectations by over 15%. Most Yellowdig behaviors were associated with better grade outcomes, particularly the extent to which a student participated compared to their classmates, which had a correlation of .416 with grade.

ASU also discovered that students who were not participating in Yellowdig assignments or engaging in fewer peer conversations were in danger of withdrawing. Yellowdig's prediction and notification system helps identify and engage higher-risk students. Yellowdig also creates visualizations of student networks to display where there are clear opportunities for intervention. This keeps more students enrolled and ensures higher graduation rates.

Breakdown of Students with Yellowdig Behavior Data and Matching ASU Grades by Number and Percent

Grade	Grade Code	N	% of overall sample	% of matched sample
Not Matched	n/a	26025	55.6	n/a
A+	11	3632	7.8	17.5
A	10	5000	10.7	24.1
A-	9	2563	5.5	12.3
B+	8	1621	3.5	7.8
B	7	2418	5.2	11.7
B-	6	1139	2.4	5.5
C+	5	732	1.6	3.5
C	4	1385	3.0	6.7
D	3	519	1.1	2.5
E	2	991	2.1	4.8
Withdrew	1	737	1.6	3.6
EN	n/a	1	0.0	0.0
I	n/a	16	0.0	0.1
Total		46779	100.0	



Course Outcomes

Grade Improvement

As part of the same study mentioned earlier in the e-book, Arizona State University created a report based on Yellowdig data matched to 20,737 student grades primarily from online classes. The majority of students using Yellowdig achieved their course goal for points, with the top 25% of point earners exceeding expectations by over 15%.

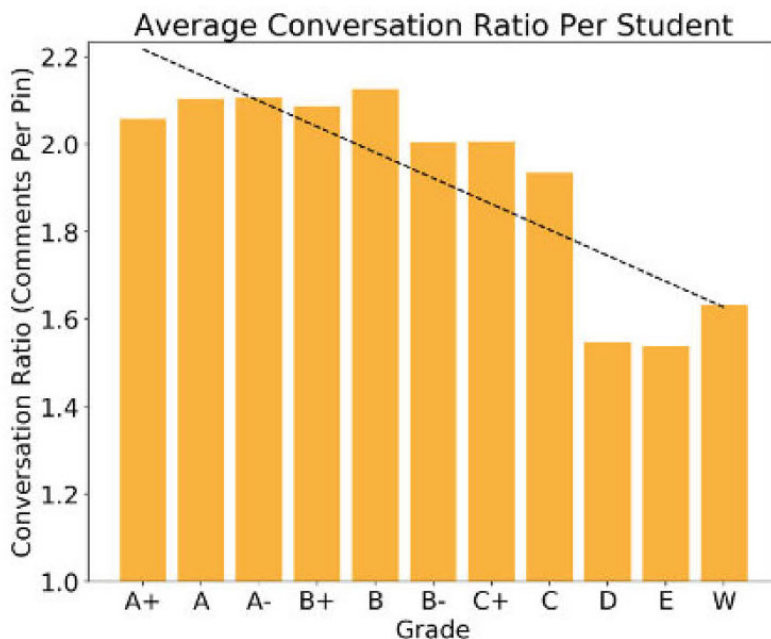
When students participated more by commenting on more of their classmate's content, they were more likely to get better grades. This is because they were actively engaging with a much wider set of course-related materials, while also collaborating with more of their peers and instructors.

This resulted in a rich educational journey. When measured, 69% of the 20,000+ students analyzed for this study met and exceeded the Yellowdig participation requirements, showing that they found intrinsic value in the community. Over the course of the semester, they continued using Yellowdig because they wanted to, not because they had to.

These correlations were even more pronounced in courses where the communities used Yellowdig's recommended best practices. These same communities also tend to have higher levels of activity and more students gaining points above and beyond the requirement for a full participation grade. Students are not just posting to get points. They are listening and learning together by commenting on the material.

Students who pass a course have an average Yellowdig grade of 82.8%, whereas failing students have an average Yellowdig grade of 29.36%.

Posts lead to comments, comments lead to conversations, and conversations result in learning. It all results in better course outcomes. When a course has a healthy Yellowdig community, students go above and beyond, creating an amazing course experience.



"The intended purpose of the gamification point system in Yellowdig is to alter behavior, not assess it, and to get students interacting with their peers. Yellowdig is designed to inspire quality posting and pro-social interactions that lead to healthy learning communities by rewarding those behaviors."

- From Yellowdig Usage and Relations to ASU Online Class Grade & Completion Outcomes

Course Outcomes

Grade Improvement



At Bryan University, educational specialist Sean Preuss analyzed the relationships between Yellowdig and course grades, pass rates, and assignment submission rates.

First, the correlation between Yellowdig grade and course grade was stronger than the correlation between live session grades (in the synchronous programs) and course grades. Both carry the same or similar point values in courses. Live classes are traditionally viewed as the pinnacle of the weekly college experience, but Yellowdig had more influence on grades and could be argued to be more important to the student learning experience.

Even though students in these classes could still earn 80-95% as a final grade in courses if they completely ignored Yellowdig, the pass rates and course grade data showed that Yellowdig participation carried out-sized value. For example, statistically speaking, students earning more than three-quarters of the available Yellowdig points were essentially guaranteed to pass the course.

Average Course Grade by Quartile of Yellowdig Performance

Yellowdig Performance	Average Course Grade (Equivalent Letter Grade)
Highest Quartile (76-100%)	91.77% (A-)
Second Quartile (51-75%)	71.24% (C-)
Third Quartile (26-50%)	52.23% (F)
Lowest Quartile (0-25%)	50.11% (F)

Pass Rate by Quartile of Yellowdig Performance

Yellowdig Performance	Pass Rate (passing students/total students)
Highest Quartile (76-100%)	98.5% (128/130)
Second Quartile (51-75%)	73.9% (17/23)
Third Quartile (26-50%)	50% (14/28)
Lowest Quartile (0-25%)	42.4% (14/33)

Student Satisfaction



A. McKinzie Sutter, professor at The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Agronomy and Horticulture Distance Education Specialist, wanted to build her learning environment around Yellowdig.

She let the students learn from each other and discuss topics from the course that they were interested in. She served as the cheerleader when students got the right answer and the expert when the right answer eluded them.

This allowed the community to grow from within. Peers stepped up to help one another instead of relying on the instructor to give them the answer.



This strengthened classroom rapport among peers and built a sense of co-constructed learning, resulting in the kinds of meaningful connections that make for an amazing education.


By the end of the course, 90% of student respondents said they would prefer Yellowdig to real time two-hour Zoom lab sessions.

Student Feedback

"It allows all students to get their thoughts out, especially those who aren't as comfortable in class. It also helps the students connect more with each other."


"I have had other classes which required discussion boards but this system was SO much better. My goodness I cannot emphasize that enough. The way the points system works and what was required of a post made it so much more engaging. They weren't these long drawn out required criterion type posts. It was recent articles and person's takeaways — so crazy how much execution matters in an assignment holding actual learning value."


How important is your company's logo?   **MARKETING**

 **Sophie Student**
07/24/2020 EDT (Edited 08/18/2020 EDT by Paul Professor)





Recently, I've become really interested in **#marketing** and **#branding**, specifically. As someone that aspires to start their own company after graduation, I have come to realize the importance of marketing, especially with new companies. Marketing not only informs potential customers of the product/service that you are offering but also is crucial in establishing the company's brand identity.

This article from *Business News Daily*, explains that **company logos play a significant role in the consumer decision-making process**. According to research by Vistaprint's Promotique, more than half of Americans are likely to frequent a company with a recognizable logo. The color and shape of the logo impact how "memorable" it is. Researchers have found that **red** is the most memorable color.

 **BUSINESS NEWS DAILY** Jan 23, 2020

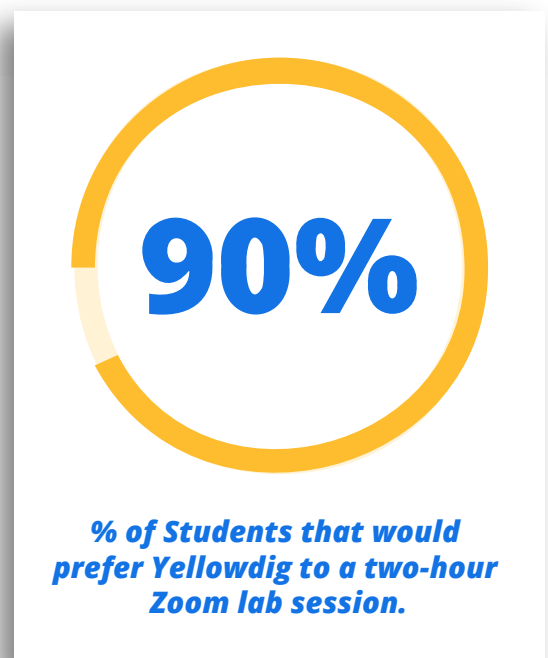


Most Consumers Avoid Brands With 'Terrible' Logos
Your company logo matters more than you may think. It can be the factor that determines whether or not a consumer buys your products.

 2  2  2 

☐ Read

Show 1 more comment



Student Satisfaction



Professor Lawrence Duke of Drexel University's LeBow School of Business has never stopped innovating over the years he has used Yellowdig for his marketing courses.

When Professor Duke first started using Yellowdig he was transitioning from older discussion technologies and was somewhat worried that students would not produce posts if he rewarded comments, or that social points might inspire students to "game the system". Many professors are nervous that social points will lead to popularity contests or unduly reward poor content.

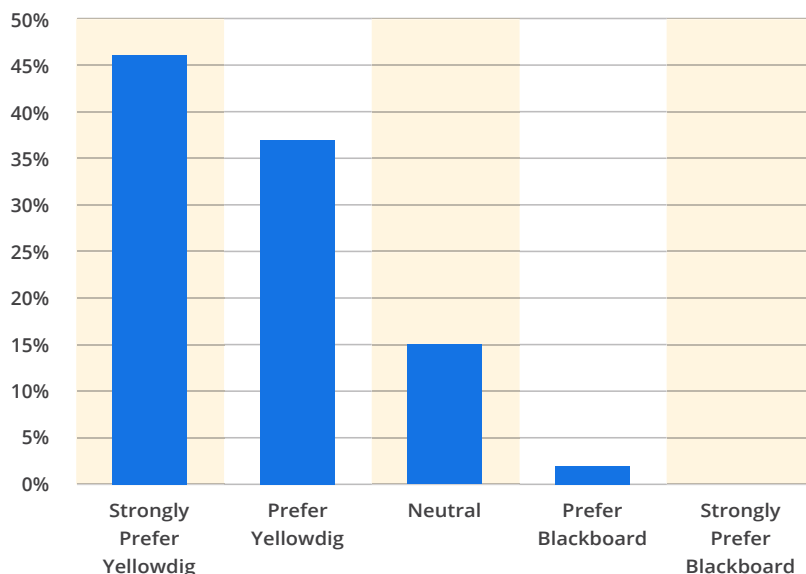
But he became a believer as semester after semester he adopted more of Yellowdig's best practices. Professor Duke instituted three major changes in the point settings. First, he enabled points for instructor accolades (formerly "badges"). Second, he doubled the value of receiving comments on posts relative to the point values for posts and comments. Third, he increased the word requirement for posts and decreased the word requirement for comments. This resulted in stronger engagement and more balanced content production.

Professor Duke collected feedback from his students at the end of every semester. Some highlights:

83% of students preferred or strongly preferred Yellowdig to Blackboard discussions; 15% were indifferent; and only one student preferred Blackboard discussions.

Students frequently characterized Yellowdig as "more interactive", "better", "easier", "different", "fun", and "amazing." Students compared Yellowdig to social media, praised the quality of the content, and reported enjoying reading others' posts.

Yellowdig vs. Blackboard
Drexel Student Feedback Over 6 Classes



Professor Duke on how often he reads his Yellowdig feed:

"I'd say one to two hours a week. I actually wanted to spend more time because there was such good content, I just didn't have the time. So there's really good content there... And I think it's more enjoyable for the students too. I actually think they are reading what other people are doing..."

Conclusion

Technology has revolutionized so much of daily life, yet the structure of many university courses has barely changed from what it was a hundred years ago. Today's learners live online and elements of their education should live there with them. We hope this e-book has given you a better idea about the role Yellowdig can play at any learning institution. We have already helped thousands of schools create communities for learners to share ideas and collaborate with one another. We aim to help many more colleges and universities provide an incredible education to students from a wide array of backgrounds, making the magic of learning more accessible to the world.



If you would like to partner with us, send an email to learnmore@yellowdig.com.

If you'd like to learn more, please visit us at yellowdig.com or use the links to the right to follow us on social media.

Thanks for reading,

Shaunak Roy
Founder & CEO

Yellowdig

