



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**Yellowdig: An Alternative
to the Traditional
Discussion Board –
Pedagogy and Use at the
UMSSW**



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Group Discussion Questions

- What do you struggle with when using discussion boards with your students – any specifics in terms of grading, feedback, participation, etc.?
- What are your goals for class discussion in general – whether the discussions take place online (sync, async) or in person?
- What are ways you've tried to meet these goals or tried to overcome challenges you've had with using discussion boards?

Topics for Presentation

- Why we decided to use Yellowdig at the School of Social Work: what are its main benefits?
- How we implemented the pilot and moved forward with it
- How it's being used in SSW courses
- What our survey data shows in terms of SSW student experience and feedback
- What's the platform like?

Why did we try it out?

Engaging interface

- Social media aspects
- Single feed
- Posts with text, links, uploads, video
- Emojis, hashtags, tagging

Pedagogy that fosters participation

- Discussions centered on topics
- Student-centered and student led
- Ability of having ongoing conversations
- Replicates conversation IRL/online

Ease of grading

- Students accrue points
- Set points for different interactions
- Passes easily to gradebook
- Can easily alter points if needed

Data/analytics

- Activity by week/topic/student
- Points per student
- Network graph

Support

- Both pedagogical and technical support
- Thorough Knowledgebase

How we implemented pilot

Assessed which courses would most benefit

Online asynchronous courses, then sync/async hybrid, all sync online, and hybrid in-person/online

Considered which faculty would be open to and prepared for piloting a new technology

Faculty completed Yellowdig certification course – 1 to 2 hours

LTI integration completed by CITS

Met with each faculty using Yellowdig to set up in course – discussed needs, various settings (earning points, topics, accolades, etc.)

Provided support/ docs/videos/info for faculty and students

Created/distributed survey for evaluation at end of term (SP22)

...and moved forward

Faculty who had piloted Yellowdig would have continued ability to use it

Continued assessing which courses/faculty would benefit and having discussions with more faculty

Word-of-mouth contacts; if used in a particular course for pilot, would others teaching that course be interested?

CITS implemented Yellowdig update

Continued meeting w/faculty to set up Yellowdig communities, provide support, distributed survey (FA22)

Decided on use for new online MSW program to launch Fall 2023

Will be using in courses plus a cohort student orientation community

How are SSW courses using Yellowdig?



Course communications and housekeeping



Questions about syllabus, course, assignments



Community announcements – i.e., live/online events related to course topics



Student/faculty introductions



Sharing current event articles related to specific course topics



Sharing and receiving feedback on paper and project topics



Sharing/engaging in activities



Skills practice with case studies, evaluation, etc.

How are SSW courses using Yellowdig? (cont.)



Reflections on learning resources (lectures, videos, readings, etc.)



Reflections on guest speaker presentations



Reactions to speeches



Journal-type posts that ask for self-reflection



Small-group discussions



Sharing presentations – a final version or a well-developed draft before final changes are due (a place for feedback and celebrating successes)

What do our students say? Spring '22

#	Field	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
1	It was easy for me to understand how to earn points in Yellowdig.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	4.17% 1	16.67% 4	37.50% 9	25.00% 6	24
2	I needed a lot of help to learn how to use the Yellowdig platform.	16.67% 4	41.67% 10	20.83% 5	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	24
3	I liked the social media aspects of Yellowdig (emojis, likes, hashtags, @tags, etc.)	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	58.33% 14	24
4	I visited the Yellowdig community/discussion board more often than I needed to.	8.70% 2	17.39% 4	8.70% 2	13.04% 3	21.74% 5	17.39% 4	13.04% 3	23
5	I would like (or would have liked) to use Yellowdig in more of my classes.	12.50% 3	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	25.00% 6	37.50% 9	24

What do our students say? Spring '22 (cont.)

#	Field	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
1	I like using Yellowdig for online discussions more than other discussion boards I have used.	8.33% 2	12.50% 3	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	66.67% 16	24
2	Using Yellowdig helped me feel more connected to my peers than with other discussion boards I have used.	12.50% 3	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	58.33% 14	24
3	The Yellowdig discussions in this class were more engaging to me than other types of online discussion boards.	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	0.00% 0	21.74% 5	4.35% 1	8.70% 2	60.87% 14	23
4	I learned more from the discussions in Yellowdig than I have from other types of online discussion boards.	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	45.83% 11	24
5	I had more interaction with my peers on the Yellowdig discussion board than I have with other discussion boards I have used.	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	54.17% 13	24
6	I had more interaction with my professor on the Yellowdig discussion board than I have with other discussion boards I have used.	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	20.83% 5	16.67% 4	41.67% 10	24
7	I was more likely to post/respond more than I needed to for my grade in the Yellowdig discussion board, as compared to other discussion boards I've used.	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	0.00% 0	58.33% 14	24
8	Yellowdig was easier to post and respond on than on other discussion boards I have used.	12.50% 3	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	12.50% 3	50.00% 12	24
9	I spent more time reading (or watching or listening) to my classmates' posts/responses in Yellowdig than I have in other discussion boards I have used.	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	12.50% 3	16.67% 4	37.50% 9	24

What do our students say? Spring '22 (feedback)

“really enjoyed...prefer Yellowdig instead of Blackboard discussion posts”

“much more user-friendly and felt much more enticing to use...did not feel as forced or repetitive as discussion boards”

“It was helpful to have a weekly and semester goal for points”

“I have taken many online courses, and this was by far my favorite experience.”

“...really loved using Yellowdig, as a student who has taken all but one of my courses at this school completely online...[with] Yellowdig I felt like I was properly engaging with the material and learning, not just doing an assignment.”

“I was exposed to more points of view...than I would have been otherwise...this made me more engaged in the course”

“...a great resource and should be implemented with more classes. I really enjoyed...connecting...and earning participation points...I felt it held [me] accountable to my course work...”

“...made the course feel more engaging and modern. I felt more willing to participate and browse other students' posts. I think it helped me learn more overall.”

What do our students say? Fall '22

#	Field	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
1	It was easy for me to understand how to earn points in Yellowdig.	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	9.09%	1	63.64%	7	27.27%	3	11
2	I needed a lot of help to learn how to use the Yellowdig platform.	27.27%	3	63.64%	7	9.09%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	11
3	I liked the social media aspects of Yellowdig (emojis, likes, hashtags, @tags, etc.)	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	9.09%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	36.36%	4	54.55%	6	11
4	I visited the Yellowdig community/discussion board more often than I needed to.	9.09%	1	9.09%	1	18.18%	2	18.18%	2	0.00%	0	36.36%	4	9.09%	1	11
5	I would like (or would have liked) to use Yellowdig in more of my classes.	9.09%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	18.18%	2	18.18%	2	18.18%	2	36.36%	4	11

What do our students say? Fall '22 (cont.)

#	Field	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
1	I like using Yellowdig for online discussions more than other discussion boards I have used.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	63.64% 7	11
2	Using Yellowdig helped me feel more connected to my peers than with other discussion boards I have used.	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	27.27% 3	45.45% 5	11
3	The Yellowdig discussions in this class were more engaging to me than other types of online discussion boards.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	36.36% 4	54.55% 6	11
4	I learned more from the discussions in Yellowdig than I have from other types of online discussion boards.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	45.45% 5	36.36% 4	11
5	I had more interaction with my peers on the Yellowdig discussion board than I have with other discussion boards I have used.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	30.00% 3	40.00% 4	10
6	I had more interaction with my professor on the Yellowdig discussion board than I have with other discussion boards I have used.	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	27.27% 3	18.18% 2	27.27% 3	11
7	I was more likely to post/respond more than I needed to for my grade in the Yellowdig discussion board, as compared to other discussion boards I've used.	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	36.36% 4	11
8	Yellowdig was easier to post and respond on than on other discussion boards I have used.	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	40.00% 4	40.00% 4	10
9	I spent more time reading (or watching or listening) to my classmates' posts/responses in Yellowdig than I have in other discussion boards I have used.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	36.36% 4	45.45% 5	11

What's a Yellowdig Community like?

Yellowdig
Learn together