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One word of advice from McKinzie to fellow Yellowdig instructors:

Make Yellowdig a learner-centered classroom. Let the students learn from each other and discuss topics from the course that they're interested in. The teacher serves as the cheerleader when students get the right answer and the expert when the right answer eludes students.

How McKinzie Uses Yellowdig:

During Summer 2019, McKinzie Sutter used Yellowdig as a graded component of an online undergraduate course on genetic principles in agriculture. McKinzie's Community was a meeting space where students raised and answered each other's questions. McKinzie refrained from answering students' questions for 24 hours to give fellow students the opportunity to answer them, and she gave Accolades (formerly "badges") for particularly helpful answers. In addition, students shared articles and videos that pertained to the course content. Finally, students were encouraged to @mention McKinzie or her co-instructor as a way of "raising one's hand."

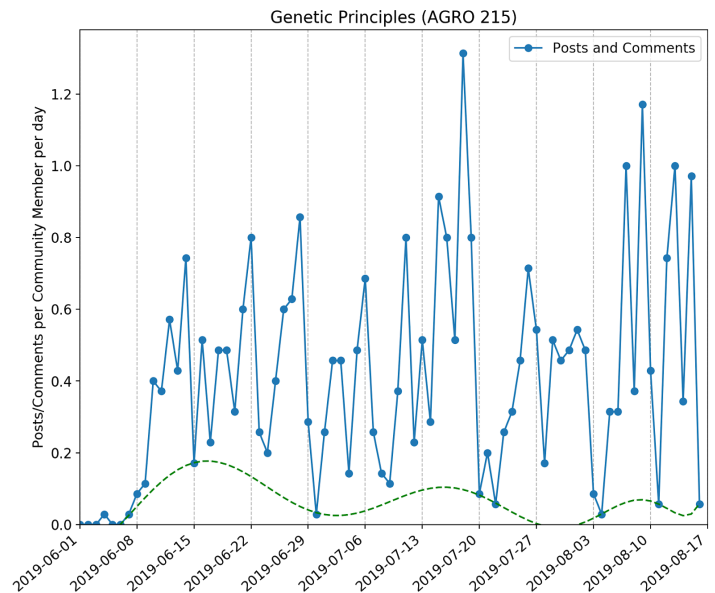
McKinzie enabled all point categories, including social points, and she made Accolades just as valuable as Posts (formerly "pins") and Comments. She also enabled the weekly max, which may have led students to contribute more consistently over time.

Points for Pin	Points for Comment	Word Req. for Pin	Word Req. for Comment	Points for Badge	Points for Upvote	Points for Getting Comment on Pin	100% Participation Target	Weekly Max	Weekly Max Enabled?	Posts Per Student	Comment to Pin Ratio	Proportion of 100% Participation Goal
3	3	40	40	3	2	1	100	12	Yes	26.45	1.32	1.9

McKinzie's Results:

On average, students in McKinzie's Community created 26 Posts and Comments and exceeded the 100% participation goal by 90%. Excluding Members who never commented or received comments, the average Community Member was connected to 18 out of 33 Members (network density = 0.54). McKinzie was connected to almost every other Member (32 out of 33) and commented on students' Posts more often than students commented on her Posts (out-degree centrality = 0.91; in-degree centrality = 0.44). McKinzie wanted her students to become more self-sufficient, and she achieved her goal; despite McKinzie's large number of connections, she was less influential than the average Community Member, having a lower than average weighted eigenvector centrality score. McKinzie's students also posted regularly over time, forging connections and answering questions at a steady pace.

Students responded positively to Yellowdig. By the end of the course, 90% of student respondents (26 out of 29) said they would prefer Yellowdig to real time 2-hour Zoom lab sessions for the summer session. Students appreciated Yellowdig's flexibility, asynchronicity, and sociality. Students also enjoyed asking questions at their own pace, expressed greater willingness to ask questions, and saw Yellowdig as an opportunity to share knowledge and help their peers.



About McKinzie:

McKinzie Sutter earned her M.S. in Natural Resources her B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She worked as a Field and Laboratory Technician for the USDA-ARS before assuming her current role as Distance Education Specialist for the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture. She continues to teach in her area of expertise and is particularly passionate about creating student-centered learning in online spaces.