Is there anybody out there? Polling Software in the Language Classroom: Breaching the void

# Dr Jennifer Wood, Modern Languages

Over the course of the pandemic, many of us have experienced the joys and vicissitudes of teaching online via MS Teams or Zoom – particularly the perennial screen view of little initialed circles during every class, with students loath to appear on screen, unmute or communicate via the chat. I know I often asked myself is there anybody actually there? At times, it could feel very much like teaching into a void and students must have felt equally isolated from both their classmates and tutors. The lack of physical presence in the language classroom was/is particularly disconcerting since language tutors often rely on being able to see students’ reactions to gauge levels of comprehension and much of our instructional practice is based on communicative interaction. A couple of techniques that worked well for me was the use of Mentimeter and the smart student response system Socrative to encourage interactive engagement, to check comprehension and to drive up learning. My presentation will show some of the ways in which I used polling and student response software to support my online practice, all techniques that are equally transferable to the in-person environment.