

Facebook group for BEL220

Facebook is literally taking over the world and we decided to use it as tool for communication with our BEL220 students. We have about 820 students registered for this subject in 2010. The large amount of students makes it difficult to personally interact with them, and Facebook was the ideal platform to create this personal interaction with our students in addition to Clickup.

The group's purpose is described as follows:

"For all students at the University of Pretoria enrolled for BEL220 in 2010. This group will be used by lecturers to communicate with students and serve as a social interface during the semester. The basic purpose is to make us a proper class in stead of just a group of random people that occasionally gathers in a lecture hall!"

What do we use it for?

- Whenever we upload documents on to ClickUp, we send a message to all members in the group. Most students have Facebook on their phones, so they know immediately when they have to go on to ClickUp.
- We don't upload documents on to Facebook, and it should also be noted that every announcement that we post on Facebook will also be posted on ClickUp, so that students who are not using this tool, is not affected negatively.
- The group facilitates communication between the lecturer and individual students. Messages can easily be sent to specific students, and the students can also send messages to lecturers. Messages sent in this way are not public, so only the lecturer and specific student will know about it.
- The group wall is used by both the lecturer and students for general comments. A few examples follows:

"morning everyone. could somebody please post the date the result for ct1 would be released please? thank you ;-)"

"Good luck with tonight's semester test! Definitely sure that you guys will do your best, and be awarded for it a thousand times over! Thinking of you! Miss T"

"Baie sterkte vir Semestertoets 1 van vandag. Ek glo dit sal goed gaan en dat elkeen van julle beloon sal word vir al julle harde werk... Doen net jul bes!!! :):)"

How is it working so far?

- About 35% of the students are part of this group. The number is however growing on a daily basis. The feedback received from the students using it was very good! Here are just a few of the comments posted by students on the group's wall:

"Thank you for this group, makes it a lot easier to know what's going on!! I think it is an awesome idea to integrate a Social-interaction platform with an academic subject, well done guys."

"the tutor classes r gr8..nd the tutor explains well..u wud b a fool 2 bank the classes"

"Thanx for the cool group!!!"

"should be interesting! Enjoying it already"

"Pass or fail thanks for de best class test."

"I really think that this is something that can be easily implemented by all modules. It really does not take ANY effort or additional time out of my day. It's a good medium of interaction with the students, and has proved to be very effective thus far", says Theresa Hills, lecturer of BEL220.