Parti in the Classroom!

What is Parti?

Parti is an add-on for Canvas that uses a student's own mobile device to submit materials for discussion. Parti was developed as part of the Integrated Learning Technology Development Grant program with SFU IT Services providing the technical development ability to bring the add-on to fruition.

Why develop it?

In a large, lecture-hall design class (~180 students), it can be difficult to get students to engage or practice design skills within the lecture. The development of Parti allows an instructor to collect a large amount of sketches quickly, then filter and discuss them. Allowing for more immediate feedback and participation within the lecture itself.

Where can I get it?

You can set up your own Parti on Canvas by following the instructions available at www.sfu.ca/canvas/instructors/external-tools.html.

Thanks to

The Teaching and Learning Centre and Integrated Learning Technology Development Grant for their administrative and financial support. Andrew Leung, Brian Hermkens and the rest of the stellar team at SFU IT Services for your development time and patience. Anita Liu and Robyn Schell for your research support and guidance.

Also, to the students of IAT-102 and IAT-110 who were patient enough to stick around.

How does Parti work?

The instructor gives students a prompt for something to sketch or write, and students complete the task and snap a photo for submission.

Students access the Canvas submission page through a short URL (e.g. ah0.ca/submit), where a TA reviews submissions as they come in.

With reviewed but anonymous submissions now visible to the class, the instructor can now discuss and draw on these submissions with the entire class.

Research into Parti

Research studies on Parti were completed in the Summer 2015 term with the assistance of Anita Liu (PhD Candidate, Education). The studies focused on student ideation performance and the effectiveness of ideation activities using Parti. Feedback instruments used in the study include focus groups, an online survey, and assignment assessment.

Perceived advantages of Parti

Timely feedback was an advantage expressed by students. Whereas with paper-based submission students would not get feedback until a week later, the digital submission allowed for students to see and receive feedback almost immediately, and within a communal lecture environment.

Students who tried Parti also expressed that peer learning — seeing their peers' work and hearing feedback on it — was beneficial as it introduced more interpretations of visual communications than just the instructor's alone.

Anonymity was also appreciated by students. Those nervous about having their work on display would not be associated with it, and feedback was guaranteed to be impartial as the instructor was unlikely to know who had generated a specific sketch.

Concerns and questions of Parti

Introducing the use of mobile devices in the classroom can cause more distraction, though students expressed not seeing them as distractions but instead an advantage of being able to use their own device. In either case, the use of Parti in a classroom as well as the invitation of mobile device use does present the potential for more student distraction.

As with any new system, interface and interaction are often concerns that come up in testing, and while Parti’s interface and interaction steps have been reworked since testing, further feedback and broader use of the system would help to improve its functionality over time.

Parti is the work of Andrew Hawryshkewich, Lecturer at SIAT, SFU.