

TechMatters: Next Level Presentations: Using Mentimeter to Boost Audience Engagement and Interaction

Krista Graham, Georgia State University

Mentimeter is a web-based presentation tool that includes built-in interactive slide templates that can be used to engage your audience and encourage participation. Whether teaching in the classroom, speaking at a conference, or conducting an online workshop, you can easily embed audience engagement elements such as interactive polls, quizzes, and real time Q&A into your presentation. It can be used to pre-assess student knowledge, gauge audience comprehension and understanding, encourage active reflection, and gather feedback from participants.

Getting Started

<http://mentimeter.com>

Create a free account by clicking on the blue “Sign up” button in the upper right-hand corner of any page on the Mentimeter site. You will be prompted to enter your name, email address, and choose a password. Alternately, you can sign-up using a Facebook or Google account.

Next, to help get you started, you will be asked where you will be using the tool: Work, Education, or Other. If you are using it for instruction, you will want to select Education and then indicate your role: Educator (higher education), Teacher (K12), or Student. Then, they will ask what your main goals are for using this tool: Engagement, Training and educating, Insights and Feedback, or Not sure yet. Next, you will be prompted to select the type of subscription plan you want—I recommend selecting “Continue with free” to begin as you can always upgrade to a paid version (e.g., \$11.99/month for unlimited questions) if you decide you like the tool and want or need, additional features. Based on your answers to the previous questions, Mentimeter will recommend a selection of presentation templates or give you the option to start from scratch. Choose one that appeals to you, or simply close the window if you don’t know or aren’t ready to create a presentation yet.

Creating a Presentation

Once you are ready to start constructing your first presentation, there are two ways to begin: using a template or creating a presentation from scratch. To start from a template, begin by choosing “Templates” from the left-hand navigation menu (see Figure 1). This will take you to a template menu containing an extensive selection of slide decks that you can start from and customize with your own presentation content. Alternately, you can create a presentation out of whole cloth by clicking on the blue “+ New presentation” button from the “My presentations” screen

To start creating, click the “+ New slide” button in the upper left-hand corner of the screen and then select the type of slide you want to use. With a free account, you can use an unlimited number of “Content slides” which include headings, paragraphs, bullets, images, and videos amongst other options. Basically, Mentimeter offers all of the standard types of presentation slides available in other presentation tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple KeyNote.

In addition to content slide options, you will also see “Question” and “Quiz competition” slide types. Keep in mind that with a free account you can only include two question and five quiz slides in each presentation deck.

Content Slides

The “Content slides” section of the “new slide” menu offers over fifteen different layout options. When you select one, a content entry form containing data fields will open to the right of the slide where you will enter the information you want to share with your audience (see Figure 2).

In addition to text, you can also include an image or a gif on each slide. To do so, you may either upload a file from your computer or use Mentimeter’s built-in image or gifs libraries. To access the image library, simply click on

Figure 1: Choose from the Selections Available in the “Templates” Menu to Get a Head Start Creating a New Slide Deck

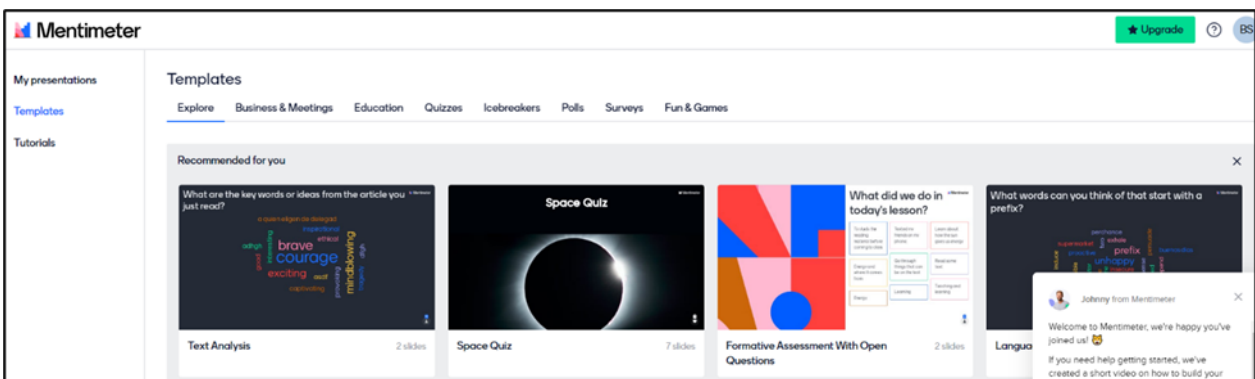
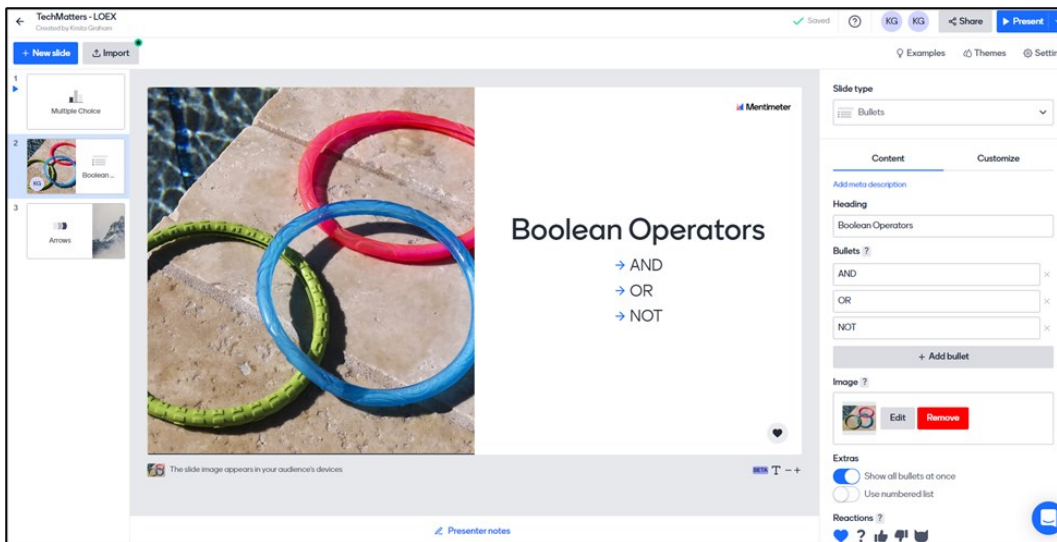


Figure 2: Content Entry Interface for Adding and Creating Presentation Slides



the image box in the content entry area, select “Image library” from the menu on the pop-out window, and do a keyword search for the type of image you need. After you select an image, you may use it as-is, crop it, and/or add “alt text” to describe it for those unable to see it. Once the image is embedded in the slide, choose the “Customize” option in the content window on the right to select a layout (e.g., image on the left vs. right, full background, etc.). You can do the same with gifs, just select “Gifs” instead of “Image library.”

On the “Content” menu, you will also find the option to add one or more of the following “Reactions” to the slide: heart, question mark, thumbs up and/or down, and (somewhat oddly) a cat. Audience members can then use these react symbols during the presentation to demonstrate their level of interest in the content.

Question and Quiz Competition Slides

Once you have developed the content that you want to share with your audience, the real power and fun of Menti comes when you begin to integrate interactive ques-

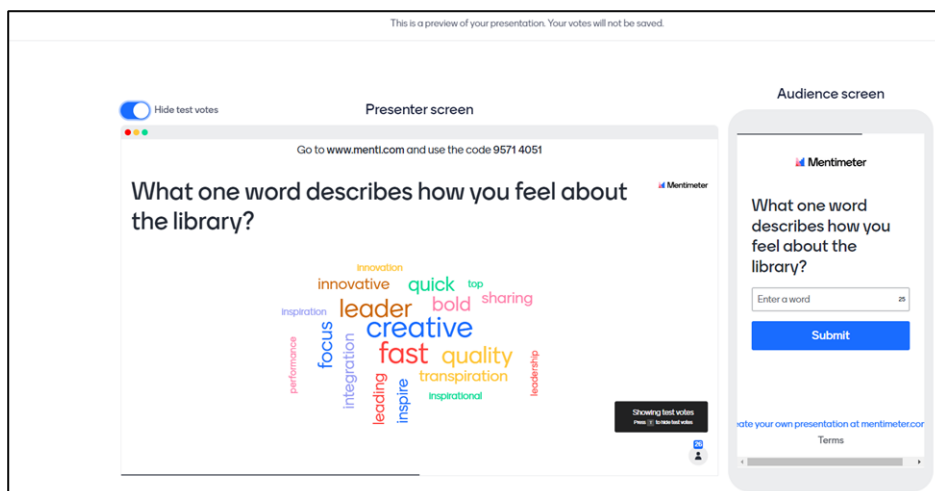
tions and quizzes into your presentation. These interactive slide types are accessed through the same “+New slide” menu as the regular content slides. “Question” types include multiple-choice, open-ended response, rating scales, ranked choice, word clouds, and more. For “quiz competition” slides you can choose between options that will prompt your quiz takers to select an answer from a list or type an answer in a text box.

Just as with content slides, the content entry and customize menus control the slide options available to you. For example, with a word cloud slide you choose the question, can determine the number of entries per participant, add an image, decide if participants can submit answers multiple times, open/close voting, and show/hide results amongst other options.

Doing a Test Run

At any point in the slide creation process, you can preview a single slide or your full presentation by clicking on down arrow on the right of the “> Present” drop-down but-

Figure 3: Presentation Preview Mode with Test Votes Enabled to Demonstrate a Word Cloud Slide



ton (which is located in the top right corner of the screen) and then selecting “Preview presentation”. In Preview mode, you will see a side-by-side representation of the Presenter screen (aka the view that would appear on a projected screen or screenshare view) and the Audience screen (aka the screen which your audience will see when they are interacting with the presentation and responding to questions).

When you are previewing a slide that includes an interactive element (see Figure 3), you can toggle the “Show test votes” option to on, which will auto-generate response data so that you can see what it would look like without having to enter and reset your own sample data.

Presenting and Interacting with Your Audience

When you are ready to go, launch into presentation mode by clicking directly on the “> Present” button. Before you begin your talk, you will want to have your audience members logged into the audience slide view. They can do this using any network connected device including cell phones, tablets, and computers. They will need to navigate to www.menti.com (note that this is a different URL than for the presenter interface) and then enter the specific code for your slide deck. Unless you specifically disable this feature, the URL and the code will appear at the top of each of your presenter screen slides (see Figure 3).

There is also an “Instructions” content slide type available that includes the URL and code along with a QR code that audience members can scan to go directly to your presentation. Consider placing such a slide at the beginning of your deck to encourage users to get setup before you begin. Alternately, you can “show voting instructions” at any point in your presentation by using the letter “i” hotkey which will auto-generate the instruction slide (see Figure 4). Finally, you can generate a “voting link” by clicking on the “Share” button (located beside the “> Present” button in the presentation builder interface); you then can copy the link and send it to participants in advance via email, or via chat if you are delivering your presentation virtually using an online meeting tool (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, Teams).

Once participants join the presentation on their devices, they will be able to respond to questions and/or quiz slides, submit open questions to the presenter, and click icons to submit “reactions” if these have been enabled. As the presenter advances through the slides in the deck, the corresponding audience engagement slides will appear on each user’s device (see Figure 5). All audience votes and questions are submitted anonymously, but for types of questions that have a correct answer (e.g., a multiple-choice one), points can be assigned and scores can be displayed on a “Leaderboard” if you so choose; however, displaying the Leaderboard is optional.

(Mentimeter...Continued on page 10)

Figure 4: Auto-generated Audience Participation Instruction Slide



Figure 5: Audience (small window) and Presenter Views for a “Work Cloud” Slide



(Mentimeter...Continued from page 6)

Teaching with Mentimeter

Now that you know how it works, you may decide to use Mentimeter as a tool to deliver library instruction to your students or patrons. If so, here are a few ideas for how it might be used to encourage interaction and engagement:

Icebreakers: Consider starting your instruction session with a fun, easy-to-answer question in order to set a relaxed tone and the expectation that there will be student participation. This will also introduce them to the mechanics of responding via Menti and reduce the number of questions you need to field about how to use the tool once you get into the meat of your presentation.

Brainstorming: Pose a question to your students and use an “open-ended” or “word cloud” slide to collect their ideas. You could either have the submitted ideas appear immediately (allowing students to build off others’ ideas), or instead, hide the results until all submissions are complete and reveal them all at once (in order to gauge, without the influence of fellow audience members, which ideas might be the most common).

Think-Pair-Share: Use Mentimeter for the “share” part of this classic classroom activity. Students can discuss their thoughts in pairs or small groups, whether in the classroom or an online breakout room, and then report out to the whole class by entering their responses via an “open ended” question slide.

Assess Knowledge: Quiz slides can be used to develop a quick assessment that you could use at the beginning of a session to judge what students already know about your topic. Alternately, you could sprinkle quiz questions throughout your presentation to assess whether students understand a specific concept or if more discussion is needed.

Feedback Tool: Allow students to provide feedback on their learning experience at the end of the class. Use a “scales” or “ranking” slide type to gauge which activities students found helpful and/or which need to be improved. Or use open-ended questions to do a “one-minute paper” where students tell you the most important concept(s) they learned and what question(s) remained unanswered.

Conclusion

Presentation software and polling applications are both commonly used by library instructors to develop and deliver engaging instructional content to students both in person and online. Typically, however, it is necessary to use at least two separate tools in order to take advantage of the strengths of each. With Mentimeter, you get the benefit of both types of tools in one, all wrapped up in an easy-to-use interface. Give it a try, and I think you’ll find that you are able to create fun, interactive, and engaging presentation materials in a snap.

(Interview...Continued from page 11)

- Norman. (1990). *The design of everyday things* (1st Doubleday/Currency ed.). Doubleday.

This was one of the textbooks I had while in library school studying human computer interaction. Norman infused humor and visualization to depict core design principles. A must read for all learning designers.

- Ritchhart, Morrison, K., & Church, M. (2011). *Making Thinking Visible : How to Promote Engagement, Understanding, and Independence for All Learners* (First edition). Jossey-Bass.

As a big believer in evidence-based practice, *Making Thinking Visible* opens a new door of designing effective assessment activities and offers a plethora of ways to make thinking visible. If you’re designing an information literacy course a/synchronously, you would benefit the most from this book.