18 Best Practices for Teaching with i>clicker

UNH uses the i>clicker Student Response System. Here is some good advice from faculty with experience using “clickers” in the classroom. For help with i>clicker, contact clickers@maple.unh.edu.

Implement the technology modestly during your first semester:
• Develop more ambitious applications as you become comfortable with the uses and limitations of the tool.

Seek advice from experienced users:
• Explore how fellow faculty members are using i>clicker in their teaching.
• Attend IDC focus groups and events to learn the latest features and uses of the tool.

Allow – and plan for – extra time in your class to use the technology:
• There may be occasional technical problems, and it takes extra set up time before each class.

Get hands-on help before your first class:
• Arrange to meet with an IDC instructional designer by contacting the Service Desk at (603) 862-4242 or https://itsupport.unh.edu/blackboard.

Set clear expectations in your course syllabus:
• Tell your students if purchasing a clicker is optional or required.
• Tell your students if the clickers will be used for grading, attendance, extra credit.
• Clearly state policies about and consequences of cheating.

Give clear instructions to your students:
• Distribute student instructions for purchasing and registering clickers and add them to your Blackboard course. Additional information for student is available under Blackboard Help and Information > iClicker > iclicker for Students.
• Provide instructions about how students can get help if they have problems with their clickers by having them contact the Service Desk (https://itsupport.unh.edu/blackboard or 603-862-4242) or the ITSC walk-in support service on the 3rd floor in the Dimond Library.

Before using the clickers, discuss with your students why you are using them:
• Talk about the value to them of Increased interaction, collaboration, and feedback.
• Ask for their thoughts on how clickers may help them learn.

Do not assign points until a week or two after the first clicker class:
• Wait until both you and your students are comfortable with the clickers before using them for any type of credit.

Consider giving credit for participation, not just for giving ‘correct’ answers
• This emphasizes to students that the exercise is about learning and not assessment.
Only use the clickers for low-stakes assessments:
  • Remember that the technology will sometimes malfunction and you should plan accordingly.

Use the clickers regularly in your classroom:
  • Research shows that most students approve of clicker use, if the clickers are used more than once a week.

Use the clickers to increase student–to–student interaction:
  • Design activities that improve faculty–student and student–to–student interactions.
  • Follow up on questions and responses with peer-to-peer discussions about the results.
  • Use the clickers to support small-group activities.

Design questions that tell you if your students are grasping your core concepts:
  • Use the clickers to get immediate feedback on student comprehension of core concepts.
  • Add a “do not know” answer to limit guessing and discover what your students learned.

Repeat concept questions for better comprehension:
  • Establish a complete feedback loop by asking the question, viewing and discussing student responses, then asking the question again.

Consider the number of possible answers:
  • Studies have shown when giving multiple-choice assessments students perform best when there are only up to 5 potential answers per question.

Consider the amount of time given per question:
  • Studies have shown when giving multiple-choice assessments students perform best when they are given between 1-2 minutes per question.

Don’t use the clickers for attendance only:
  • Focus groups have shown that students view clickers as costly and inconvenient when used only as a tool for taking attendance.

Don’t use the clickers solely as quizzing tool:
  • Students appreciate the interaction and engagement the clickers introduce into the classroom, therefore, don’t want faculty to use purely an assessment device.