



2007 AMA Summer Educators' Conference High Impact Sessions

4.4 The Use of Personal Response Devices (Clickers) in Marketing Education

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Personal Response Devices: A Resource for Large Introductory Marketing Classes
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Should Clickers Be In Your Future?
Doug Lincoln, Boise State University

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In an era marked by soundbite newscasts, ubiquitous text messaging, and a technologically savvy population, shortened student attention spans are, plain and simply, the norm. In an effort to engage students in the classroom, a variety of technology-enhanced tools has emerged that provides solutions for both teachers and students. In this session, research centering on the efficacy of implementing one such technology—PRDs (Personal Response Devices)—was presented, along with a list of best practices.

To provide attendees with a more thorough understanding of the ease of adoption of PRDs, Drs. Lincoln and Preis provided an overview of basic clicker operations. Additionally, they expounded on many of the benefits of adoption, including:

- Supporting software provides immediate in-class feedback on student's understanding of the material
- The technology can be used to conduct both impromptu and planned quizzes and it allows for rapid feedback to students
- clicker usage stimulates a virtual Socratic dialogue, in light of ever increasing class sizes

Research conducted on large sections (325-650 students) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign concluded that students felt that the technology was easy to use, it facilitated their learning of the concepts presented in class, it was a good use of class time, they were more likely to attend class and they were more engaged. Recommended future research stemming from this work, according to Dr. Michael Preis, should

investigate the effects of clickers on actual academic performance of both undergraduate and MBA students.

In a related study on classes of about 60 students, Dr. Doug Lincoln at Boise State University had similar findings; that is, the students maintained that class was more engaging and enjoyable with clicker usage. It is also noteworthy that he conducted his research using clicker technology, suggesting that it is viable technique for surveying convenience samples.

Finally, in terms of best practices for PRD usage, research and experience showed that while system implementation could be used to increase class attendance, efforts should be made to avoid penalizing the student in the case of system failure. Also, if clickers are used to test students, grades should be posted promptly. Finally, although not empirically tested, the researchers suggested that PRDs helped to make them better teachers, as they spent more time thinking about course material.