

Using Clickers to Engage Students and Facilitate Immediate Feedback ACTFL Annual Convention, November 23, 2008

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What's a "Clicker"?

- a.k.a. Student Response System, Audience Response System, Classroom Response System, etc. "SRS" for short
- Interactive remote answering devices. System provides teachers immediate feedback from students in a visual format.

SRS in the Classroom

- Provides teacher and student with immediate feedback
 - Prepare for assessments. Teacher and students discover gaps in comprehension
 - Helps teacher tailor instruction; make more efficient use of class time
- Useful in introducing concepts
- Increases interactivity
 - Engaging. Helps retain students' attention
 - Increases participation by shy/reluctant students
 - All students answer all questions
- Quizzes and tests graded and recorded automatically
- And let's face it - it's fun!

Types of Questions

- Varies with system. Commonly multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false, yes/no, sequencing, survey/rating scale
- Some systems include numeric answer, short answer, essay
- Quality of the questions dependent on the teacher. Multiple choice can be challenging.
- Include cross-disciplinary material and questions "on the fly"

Teachers Speak Out

- "I can get immediate feedback and see where there are gaps in understanding. SRS makes the class interactive and ensures that all students are participating in the lesson."
- "As a teacher, targeting how many students do not understand a concept becomes painfully clear (but still fun) when you cue the answer distribution button."
- "When they beg to use SRS you know it's a wonderful way to encourage learning!"

SRS in the World Language Classroom – Some examples

- Listening
 - Insert audio and images. Students identify pictures, statements, words, etc. based on audio clip
 - Insert video to increase interest and aid comprehension
 - Use sequencing feature to sort order of events (weather report, news report, story, etc.)
- Speaking
 - Give a topic of interest and perform survey. Students discuss their opinions in small groups before retaking the survey
 - Use images and open-ended/survey questions to stimulate discussion. (e.g. In your opinion, why is the woman in the picture frustrated?)
- Reading
 - Use context cues, prefixes/suffixes, word families, analogies, etc. to build reading skills
 - Use for pre-reading exercises. Show images related to reading, or selected sentences. Students make predictions about the text to prepare for reading passage.
 - Practice reading passages and answering multiple choice questions

- Writing
 - Use sequencing to form sentences in correct word order
 - Use “create your own adventure” format to give writing prompts. Students “vote” on a path for the next segment of the story they are writing.
 - If remotes allow, use essay and short answer features for writing practice
- Grammar & Vocabulary
 - Possibilities are endless. Most standard grammar and vocabulary questions adapt beautifully for SRS.
 - Enhance with images, audio and video from your textbook’s ancillary materials/web site
- Quizzes/Tests
 - Track students’ progress as they answer questions
 - Teacher chooses whether or not changing answers is allowed
 - Can be used for self-paced worksheets
- Impromptu Questions
 - Questions can be added at any time. Pursue topics in more depth, or as they occur naturally in class.
 - Brainstorm and write possible answers on the board to give students a visual. Questions are sent to the remotes from the teacher-controlled station or remote.

Resources

- Addison, S. et al (2007) Successfully deploying student response systems
- National Spanish Exam - Online Practice Examinations (Level 2, 2007 Proficiency Exam)
- National German Exam - AATG Exam Samples (Level 2, 2005)
- National French Exam (Level 3, 2005)
- Glencoe Online Media Center (Bon Voyage, Level 2)
- Learning & Leading with Technology, vol. 34, no. 8 © 2007, ISTE ® (International Society for Technology in Education), <www.iste.org> All rights reserved.

Using Blogs to Build Community and Conversations

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Using Blogs to Begin a Learning Community (A First Assignment)

Overview: Students write a self-portrait of themselves (stemming from a picture) and post it in a private blog for the class.

Objectives:

- To build our community
- To begin to understand how to use a blog
- To improve writing skills and comfort of writing in target language (we did not use it this way in our class but I have in the past)

Assignment:

In this assignment, each participant will tell the other members of the group about him / herself using a blog. Tell us your story! Who are you? How does this picture represent you and your personality? Include a detail about yourself that you think the other people don't know!

Sample Assessment Rubrics:

It will be graded with an E/S/U system (for my Masters level courses. My undergraduate courses sometimes get A, B, C, D, F grades):

E = Excellent. Exceeded expectations, very creative, went beyond minimum requirements. (A)

S = Satisfactory. Met expectations, creative, assignment completed. (B)

U = Unsatisfactory. Did not meet expectations. Limited creativity, incomplete. (C and below)

Comments:

This was one of the first assignments for this course. I have done this before in hybrid courses and I am always amazed at the responses! Students, especially digital natives, share so much about themselves in this medium. This was originally something I saw in Women's Studies literature about building community / ice breakers and it was for a traditional classroom. I adapted it to a blog environment. Everyone likes to tell his or her story and I learned things about my students that I had never known (and some of them I had known for four years!). Students who never speak in the classroom were able to post and show a different aspect of themselves. I have done it in the target language and in English. Also,

the comments should be part of the assignment. Depending on the size of the class, students must read and comment on a certain number of responses. In this way, we continue the conversation and our knowledge of each other in a meaningful and sustained way. I am using it again this semester in a second-year French class. Students are writing more (in an effort to look good!) and commenting on everyone's blog. The comments come directly to my email account and I can quickly respond to their comments: all in French! Students have commented that they like reading and getting comments and are having fun with the assignment. I encourage you to try it with your students!

One word of warning:

When doing this with first-year students and in a public blog (before we had a closed environment like Wordpress), I did have students post information that I would consider sensitive. As Dr. Roberta Lavine said, their ideas about public / private and ours are not always the same. I was especially concerned because our blogs at that point were fully on the internet and open to all. So, I have since worked to discuss with students the difference between an "academic" or class assignment and their personal blogs. A private space such as Wordpress also helps! You can get a free account online and you do not need any set-up or tech support from your schools!

Learning Styles:

In my experience, this assignment appeals to many different learning styles. Even people who don't like to speak in class have something to say here. Participation is part of all of my courses. When I use a blog in my class, I divide the participation grade between in-class participation and participation in the blog. Since I started doing this, ALL students have improved participation! Those who like to speak in class are not generally against posting in the blog. Those who hate to speak in class often love posting to the blog and post well over the required minimum. It really aides in creating a sense of community, even in classes where we meet face-to-face!

For now, this is just an example of what you can do: Using theories on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences as described by Armstrong, this assignment can address at least 5 different intelligences or learning styles: linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic.

- The linguistic learners like this assignment because they can use words to describe themselves (some students also use pictures, which would address yet another kind of learner).
- Interpersonal learners like the social aspect of this assignment. They are excited to see what others have to say about their work and they like commenting on posts.
- Intrapersonal learners can also appreciate this assignment. These learners often keep a journal or diary. It is interesting that in my hybrid classes, students assess or "read" the intrapersonal learners quite quickly. These learners are often hesitant to post at first. But, somehow, the comments the class puts on these journals (if they put any at all aside from required ones) have a different tone than the ones they post on the interpersonal learner posts. So, once intrapersonal learners see how their posts are being treated, they are more comfortable posting and even share amazing

details with the class! I also think the "digital generation" in general is more comfortable sharing what we might consider to be personal details in a blog. My intrapersonal learners almost all have blogs! So, I just have to work with them to feel comfortable about posting some things in the class blog.

- Bodily-Kinesthetic learners like this too. For some it may be the typing or interaction with the tools. For others, it might be the freedom to complete this assignment at home, watching TV, listening to music, and interacting with all kinds of hypermedia.
- Musical learners could appreciate this assignment if they included audio files, etc. in their blog. It doesn't just have to be words! You can upload audio files, numbers, photos, artwork, and more! In this way, the post is flexible and able to adapt to your personality and learning style / intelligence. It might even be adaptable to all of the intelligences Armstrong mentions! It's just that these are the ones I have seen so far.

Types of Interaction: (adapted Regeiluth and Moore, 1999 by Hamma, et al.):

There is some "learner - teacher" because as the teacher I ultimately respond to questionable situations or inappropriate material. I also give a participation grade for this work. There is a lot of "learner-learner" interaction: they must read and comment on the posts. There is also "learner-tools" interaction as learners communicate using the blog and learn how to operate that format.

Selected Resources:

Armstrong, T. (1994). *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Carlson, S. (2005). The net generation goes to college, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (52) 7, A34-A37.

Fisch, K. (2006). *Shift happens 2.0*. Retrieved February 14, 2008:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMcfrLYDm2U>

Hamma, D.E. Glowacki-Dudka, M and Conceicao-Runlee, S. (2000). *147 practical tips for teaching online groups*. Madison: Atwood.

Lavine, R. Z. (2007, March). *Educating today's generation of digital natives*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Centers for International Business Education and Research, Columbus, OH.

Lomicka, L., & Cooke-Plagwitz, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Teaching with technology*. Boston: Thomson Heinle.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants, *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6. Retrieved May 4, 2007, from <http://www.markprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Ch1-Digital%20Game-Based%20Learning.pdf>.

Actual Assignment Details (the “how-to” portion that I give to students)

Self-Portrait Assignment

By Gay Rawson

Overview: In this assignment, each participant will tell the other members of the group about him / herself using a blog. Tell us your story! Who are you? How does this picture represent you and your personality? Include a detail about yourself that you think the other people in the group don't know!

Objectives:

- To build our on line community
- To begin to understand how to use a blog in this course environment
- To use our French!

Assignment Details:

1. Choose a picture that represents you (and / or some aspects of your personality). Feel free to include objects or a site that hold special meanings to you. You want to have a smaller-sized photo.
2. Log-in to the Wordpress Blog for our course at the following link:
<http://rawson67.wordpress.com/wp-login.php>
3. You are now in our course academic blog.
4. On the right hand side of the page, there is a link for “site admin.” Click on this to get to the administrative areas of the blog (writing, editing, etc.).
5. Click the appropriate category for this blog. The categories are listed on the right hand side of the page. For this assignment, click “self-portrait.” Be sure to unselect “uncategorized!”
6. At the top of the page is a “tab” that says “write,” click on this. Please give your blog a title.
7. When you are ready to write, you may begin typing in the section marked “post” just like you would in any other word processing program. You may notice that there are even ways to put things in bold or italics and do other minimal formatting.
8. Be sure to load your picture. To do this, you need to scroll down to the “upload” section of the blog. It helps to have already scanned your photo and saved it to your computer. Now, you can click on “browse” and find the photo file that you want from your computer or the internet. Once you have found the file address for your photo, give it a title and a description. This is important for ADA compliance: some people are visually impaired so they might have software that will read the title and description. Now hit “upload.”
9. In theory, you photo will load without a problem. However, in the past, there have been some glitches here. Just take a deep breath and let us know if it's

not working. Depending on your computer speed, this might take a few minutes.

10. Once you get the photo loaded, it will appear in the bottom window next to a menu of editing selection. You want to make sure "thumbnail" is selected. If it isn't, this means that your photo was too large. Try again with a different photo or reformat your photo so it's smaller. You can "compress" it with most programs for viewing in a webpage and that should work.
11. If you are desperate, you can right click on your photo in the upload section and hit "copy." Then decide where you want to put it in the "post" / writing section, right click again, and hit "paste." This is not ideal because the URL or address to the photo is not being saved properly but it will get you through in a pinch. It will also show you how large your picture will be. Often larger than we want so it's best to work on changing the photo so you can follow step 12.
12. Once your photo is uploaded and the thumbnail is selected, hit "send to editor." Your photo should appear in the "post" section of the blog.
13. You can always hit "save and continue editing" so you don't lose your work. When you are happy with the post (you can always edit it further at a later date), click "save." Then you need to click "publish" for it to appear on our blog site.
14. If you want to see the blog, you can click on the title banner at any time and it will show you our site (hopefully with your new entry as part of it). When you want to return to writing, etc., click the "site admin" link again and you are ready to contribute again!
15. Logout when you are done (the "logout" link is on the right below the "site admin" button.)

The podcast as a source of authentic discourse for language learning and teaching

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Please visit this web page for additional information:
<http://www.forl.unt.edu/~lfw/actfl2008/>

1. Authenticity: A cornerstone of Communicative Language Teaching
 2. A typology of podcasts
 3. An overview of podcast discourse
 4. An overview of listening comprehension research
 5. Creating learning opportunities for students: The New London Group (1996) framework
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" Listening comprehension lies at the heart of language learning, but it is the least understood and least researched skill" (Vandergrift, 2007, p. 191).

Selected References

- Buck, Gary. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Flowerdew, John, & Miller, Lyndsay. (2005). *Second language listening: Theory and practice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Vandergrift, Larry. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: acquiring successful strategies. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 53, 168-176.
- Vandergrift, Larry. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching*, 40, 191-210.