Meeting Notes from 07/13/06, 8:30am, Weir Hall Room 107

Members Present: Joey Brent, Buffy Choinski, Barbara Dougherty, Maurice Eftink, Kevin Herrera, Amy Mark, Penny Rice

Guests Present: Tammy Goulet, Lydia Hailman, Amelia Rodgers, MK Smith

Clicker Presentation by Tammy Goulet:

Tammy has been using clickers in her Bisc 102 – "Inquiry into Life" class for 3 years. She received the funds to purchase the clickers through a Partner's and Associate's grant. The first year, she used H-ITT brand clickers. Tammy stated that these were not easy to use, so they changed clicker companies the second year and used EduCue PRS infra-red clickers. These clickers were much easier to use, but did have a few drawbacks – Receiver mounts had to be permanently mounted in the classroom; the system would not work for classes with more than 300 students, and students had no way to know when their answer had been received. This year, Tammy has purchased new PRS RF clickers. These clickers, which operate on radio frequency, will eliminate the drawbacks of the old infra-red clickers. They do not require mounted receivers to be placed in the classroom. Instead, the RF receiver is roughly the size of a CD case and connects to any computer using a USB port. The RF receiver can also accommodate classes with more than 300 students, and the clickers have a digital display that lets the students know when their answer has been received.

Tammy stated that using clickers has increased her class participation because students can answer anonymously with the clickers; they don't feel like they are being singled out as they would if they had to raise their hand. She said that she gives a quiz, using the clickers, every class period, and this has kept her class attendance at 85% rather than the 50% attendance experienced by other Bisc 102 classes.

Tammy incorporates her quiz questions into a PowerPoint presentation. Each clicker has a unique ID. Once a student has been associated with that ID in the PRS software, the software keeps track of that student's responses. Once Tammy gives a quiz in class, the answers are recorded, the quiz is automatically graded for each student, and the results can be exported into an excel file.

Tammy recommends the booklet, "Uses of Clickers in the Classroom", ISBN 0-8053-8728-5 for further ideas on how to use clickers in the classroom.

Tammy says that clickers can also be used as an assessment tool to gauge when it's time to move on to a new topic. Questions can be asked verbally, rather than having to be typed into a PowerPoint presentation. This allows her to ask a question, see an immediate response complete with bar graph, and based on the response, decide whether a sufficient number of students have grasped the concept and are ready to move on to the next topic.

Concerns:
- Cost to the student
  - The cost to the bookstore for each clicker is $35.
  - The bookstore marks the price up to nearly double this for the students.
- Clicker companies
  - Which companies are the most reliable?
  - Tammy has had a good experience with PRS.
  - Michael Namorato uses clickers from CPS in his class.
- Changing technologies
  - Will students need to buy new clickers each semester?
  - With the introduction of RF clickers, clicker technology should not change much more.
- 2-Fisted clickers
  - A student might bring his friend's clicker to class and take the quiz for himself and his friend simultaneously.
  - Just as with all cheating, instructors have to be on their guard against this occurring.

Advantages:
- Cool gizmo
  - Student's today all have cell phones and text messaging and so look upon the clicker as cool gizmo
- Increased attendance
  - Because it is so easy to give quizzes and receive the grades automatically, quizzes can be given in class every day, and this helps to keep attendance from falling off as the semester progresses.
- Instant assessment
  - Quizzes are automatically graded as the answers are keyed into the clickers.

Clicker Presentation by MK Smith:

MK stated that UM does not currently have a way to track clicker use in the classroom. She sent out a survey to see which faculty were using clickers, but received only a few responses. It would be nice if we asked faculty to report all clicker use to the FTDC. It would be useful for faculty to know which of their peers was using clickers so that they could share ideas.

MK mentioned that the bookstore has a "No buy-back" policy on clickers.

It was suggested that we ask Tammy to give her clicker presentation again during the annual Instructional Technology Enhancement Week this September.

The committee will meet again in 2 weeks to continue the clicker standardization issues.

The meeting was dismissed at 10:00am.