Student’s perceptions of using of electronic voting systems in large lectures

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Universities have traditionally used lectures to facilitate the transfer of information in large classes, although these methods do not allow sufficient dialogue with students, and even when students were questioned during class, they generally remain silent. The use of an electronic voting system (EVS) to pose questions during lectures alleviates this problem as students are able to respond anonymously in the presence of their peers without embarrassment or ridicule. This study investigates student’s experiences with the use of the Keepad EVS in large, first year, Biochemistry lectures. Keepads are used for electronic voting on multiple choice questions during lectures in order to engage students and make lectures interactive. There are many ways in which the Keepads can be used, these include (1) the investigation of prior knowledge; (2) the assessment of understanding key concepts during lectures; (3) to trigger class discussions of ambiguous answers; and (4) quizzes for course assessment. The technology allows immediate viewing of the results (histogram) and therefore, instant feedback to students as well as teachers. This enables us as teachers to immediately gauge student perception or misconceptions, and identify points of confusion. The objectives are to investigate student’s experience of using Keepads in lectures, by understanding their perceptions of this technology on their learning practices. These studies have shown that the Keepad EVS can promote active learning and reflective practices which enhances student learning by providing instant feedback, and a forum for student-student and student-instructor engagement. At the same time feedback enables the instructor to identify and correct misconceptions immediately by taking the appropriate action.