Classroom Electronic Response Systems (ERS)

Components

- Electronic response systems consist of two components: individual transmitters and a centralized classroom receiver.
- Transmitters can be either secured to classroom desks or purchased by a student for use in multiple classes (in this case, some systems provide unique transmitter IDs which match specific students to their responses).
- In a large class, several classroom receivers may be more effective for capturing all responses (some systems give students feedback on whether their responses have been received; this is important if an ERS is used for quizzes, attendance, etc).
- The system also requires a classroom projection system.

Features

- ERS models vary, but most have software that supports graphics, charts, equations, and text.
- Most are compatible with windows, allowing instructors to move between the ERS displays (of questions and response trends) and other programs/graphics.

Uses

- Taking attendance;
- Charting students’ initial knowledge/assumptions about a topic;
- Gauging comprehension;
- Administering quizzes;
- Keeping attention (in a NY Times article, a professor talks about how students cannot be occupied with laptops, cell phones, etc. because they know questions are coming-accountability);
- Engaging individuals and small groups in a large class (students can be split into groups that must report a response as a group);
- Preserving anonymity (for shy students or difficult subjects), providing immediate feedback, and establishing a Q&A model (or a focus group model) for investigative learning.