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Enhancing student engagement in the classroom

Day 2 – Parallel V (14.00-14.45)

Student engagement with course material is variable, both in lectures and in group tutorial/PC Lab classes. Lectures are often didactic, with interactive activities a rarity; in group tutorials it is often difficult to get students to settle down and make productive use of the time. Research has shown that the use of in-class response systems can promote cooperative learning with “students becoming active participants in the learning process” (Beatty, 2006). ‘Socrative’ - a freely available tool of this type - allows any web-enabled device to respond to either ad-hoc or prepared tests. This has been used weekly with one group throughout the Autumn term, 2012 to introduce team working and a small competitive element. It has proven to be transformative with engagement dramatically improved. Part of each session was given over to a group discussion in which we were able to evaluate the session itself; this informed the next week’s delivery with the result that over the course of the term operation of the session evolved ‘organically’. In this respect, students were very closely involved in the design and delivery of their own programme. Socrative has also been used in lectures with a first year group to provoke discussion, and to generate an element of formative assessment. In this session we will discuss both the use of this tool, and other non-technological strategies for improving student engagement with course materials in the classroom. If you plan to attend, and own a smartphone or tablet device, please download and install the free ‘Socrative Student’ app first.

Beatty, I.D et. al., “Designing Effective Questions for Classroom Response System Teaching”, *Am. J Phys.*, 74, pp31-39, 2006