Beyond Surface Learning: Teaching with Clickers to Motivate and Engage Students

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Monday, April 7, 2014
12:00 noon-1:30 p.m.
CITL Workshop Room East Tower E243

Classroom response systems (“clickers”) are technologies that enable teachers to rapidly collect and analyze student responses to multiple-choice questions during class. Although clickers can be used to ask students the kinds of multiple-choice questions you might put on a test, other kinds of questions can often promote deeper learning. In this talk, we’ll explore ways to craft clicker questions that help students to engage more meaningfully with course content, including questions designed to address student misconceptions, surface student opinions and experiences, and foster critical thinking skills. We’ll also discuss strategies for leading class discussions using clicker questions that frame and motivate those discussions. This event is part of the spring semester’s series on critical thinking.

Derek Bruff is director of the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching and a senior lecturer in the Vanderbilt Department of Mathematics. As director, he oversees the Center’s programming and offerings for faculty and graduate students, helping them develop foundational teaching skills and explore new ideas in teaching and learning. He also consults regularly with campus leaders about pedagogical issues, seeking to foster a university culture that supports effective teaching. Bruff’s research interests include educational technology, visual thinking, and social pedagogies. He blogs on these topics at derekbruff.org, and his book, Teaching with Classroom Response Systems: Creating Active Learning Environments, was published by Jossey-Bass in 2009. Bruff has taught at Harvard University and has a PhD in mathematics from Vanderbilt University.