

Student Response Systems in Action by Keepad Interactive

Currently, it is difficult for principals, regional directors and system leaders to receive timely information on the quality of instruction in schools and how students are progressing.

School leaders prefer not to wait until the end of the term or year (by which time it is too late) to find out whether learning outcomes have been met or are at least improving.

Ideally, data would be available on a daily basis, allowing immediate identification of the students who need extra assistance and exactly what kind of help they need. It would also identify those classrooms in which the pace of instruction is falling behind or proceeding too fast, or in which students are making slow or rapid progress.

This means school leaders can provide targeted support to teachers rather than playing the blame game when it's too late to change the outcome. More importantly, school leaders would then have the data to identify common problems and concerns and to lead inquiry into how the instructional system could be improved.

Well-targeted formative assessment can generate feedback for teachers to guide their teaching and feedback for students to guide their learning. And knowing students' starting points is crucial because

a student's readiness to learn is related to what he or she already knows and can do (Fullan, Hill, Cravola, 2006).

Plumpton High School use TurningPoint

Use of formative assessment to design an improvement path at the individual and collective levels is behind Eric Jamieson's decision to increase the number of world leading TurningPoint Student Response System (SRS) classroom kits from 6 to 21 following a successful 4 month trial earlier this year.

At Plumpton there is recognition that data driven instruction is a strategy for improving pedagogy as a more precise causal link of student learning.

Eric Jamieson is hoping to set the stage for classroom instruction where the current data collection is streamlined, analysis is automated, and individualised instruction is delivered on a daily basis in every classroom – something that has evaded solely results-oriented school programs.

The TurningPoint keypads play a valuable role in gathering face-to-face feedback and creating automated class reports. Feedback to teachers enables them to focus their instruction; feedback to students enables them to monitor and improve their learning.

Some specific learning theories applied in the classroom using keypads and the TurningPoint software include: Immediate Feedback (Epstein), Spacing Effect (Prensky), Peer Instruction (Mazur), Agile Teaching (Bruff) and Learning Styles (Keefe).

Normally, a teacher with 5 classes of 30 students a day wouldn't expect to review prior work or evaluate concept knowledge for all 150 students, yet they can do that easily any time at Plumpton. You would expect students to prefer the results to be anonymous, but according to Tess Devine, Math Head teacher, they prompt her if she doesn't use the class participant list when she polls her classes.

TurningPoint Keypads help Positive Behaviour for Learning Teams

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Consultants from Western Sydney Region use TurningPoint SRS to show school PBL Teams how they can get greater buy-in from their colleagues and students.

The benefits of a successful Positive Behaviour for Learning implementation are well documented, with schools becoming safer and more productive and students improving their behaviour,



self-concept and motivation to learn.

A recent UWS study (Mooney, 2008) observed best results are achieved when:

- there is a high level of staff ownership of the PBL process
- there is a high level of involvement of students in decision making
- there is a high degree of clustering between primary and high school.

In addition to everyday engaged learning benefits, TurningPoint SRS enables a PBL team to:

- effectively engage their peers by polling current level of knowledge of behaviour management process (address potential misconceptions across the entire staff)
- get their opinion and agreement on a core set of values such as Support, Tolerance, Attitude and Respect (STAR)
- test various assumptions about how these will impact different teachers, subjects and grades
- agree on a mission statement addressing expected student behaviour.

Once teacher buy-in has been achieved, teachers use the TurningPoint (TP) keypad technology to get students

involved. There are even examples where students have facilitated the PBL process by preparing their own TP surveys!

PBL teams can also use the TP keypads to engage parents and local schools to enlist their support.

TurningPoint Keypads count cut and thrust of Aboriginal students' debate

Twelve Aboriginal debating teams assembled at the NSW Parliament's Legislative Council on 17th August to debate six matters of public importance in a 'Government v Opposition' style debate:

- that anybody can lead the Aboriginal people
- that intervention is needed for Aboriginal people to adjust to today's society
- that government policies assist in closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities
- that remote Aboriginal communities are the key to closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
- that we need Aboriginal figureheads to inspire the Aboriginal population to achieve higher
- that there is enough media coverage of Aboriginal achievements.

Using handheld TurningPoint keypads, the opinions of the audience were recorded before each proposition was debated and again at the end of the debate with the results displayed live as bar charts.

The topic that caused the biggest upset was: 'that anybody can lead the Aboriginal people'. Before the debate, 55% opposed the statement. But after debaters made the points that politicians such as Gough Whitlam and Kevin Rudd had taken a stand in support of Aboriginal causes and that political stereotypes were now being more frequently broken, they argued that leadership could spring from many sources. The result was that the government line was supported by 56% - a complete turnaround from the pre-debate score of 28%.

The Aboriginal Debate, which is now in its sixth year, was organised by the Sydney Region Aboriginal Education Team of the NSW Department of Education and Training in conjunction with the Parliament House Education Section and involved 12 schools from Sydney Region.

For more information visit www.keepad.com or call 1800 463 279