

USING TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE MARKETING PRINCIPLES COURSE: THE RANDOM SELECTOR MODEL

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ABSTRACT

"The only privilege a student had that was worth his claiming was that of talking to the professor and the professor was bound to encourage it. His only difficulty on that side was to get them to talk at all. He had to devise schemes to find what they were thinking about and induce them to risk criticism from their fellows." (The Education of Henry Adams)

Because of the growing interest in interactive learning, educators are increasingly aware of the need to identify methods and techniques that engage students in their learning. Extant research demonstrates how technology can support and augment traditional classroom teaching and improve learning. In 1999 the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities released a report urging universities to "teach students critical thinking skills using collaborative, interactive teaching methods." The use of technology in undergraduate marketing courses has been acknowledged by scholars and educators as both inevitable and beneficial. Indeed, the antiquated model of the sage on the stage—teacher at the blackboard—with students in their seats is being replaced by the guide on the side using interactive technology.

Research across a variety of disciplines has identified techniques that encourage students to prepare for and participate in classroom discussion. Techniques that encourage participation include the following: call on students when they volunteer, call on students by name, show signs of approval and interest, repeat, highlight, and amplify students' responses, praise students, pose questions, ask for elaboration, accept students' answers, repeat students' answers, and correct wrong answers.

Given the extant research on interactive learning and student participation, we created the Random Selector Model to encourage preparation for and participation in class discussions. Students frequently participate in team projects, case analyses, and other class activities. Often it is impractical to give every team or every student an opportunity to share their results and experiences in class. The Random Selector Model enables the instructor to select individual students or teams of

students to participate in class discussion. Because the method is random, students view this approach as an interesting probability problem rather than a situation where the instructor "picks on" or "favors" particular students. The Random Selector Model motivates students to prepare in anticipation of being selected.

The Random Selector Model is a configurable, multi-media software application written in the C# programming language. The application can be configured to select up to twenty teams. Each team can have up to ten members. There are three panels available for selecting teams, individual students within teams, and individual students. The application contains three additional configuration panels that are used to locate images, sounds and text, and add them to the application.

Feedback from students in the marketing principles course has been positive. Verbatim comments from students provide support for the usefulness and value of the Random Selector Model to increase preparation for and participation in class discussions:

"Not only was it fun, but it did give me an extra incentive to be prepared for class. I didn't want to be called on unprepared."

"I enjoyed the random selector and thought that it added value to the class. It was fun to be chosen to participate in a non-traditional way. The music added to the enjoyment as well. I don't think that it was a distraction in any way. If I were you, I'd keep using the selector."

"The random selector tool was a fun and exciting way to keep oneself alert and ready to answer questions when selected."

"I really enjoyed the random selector. I think it helped me prepare more thoroughly for class and it kept my attention in the learning process. I enjoyed the little sounds and they were perfect indicators of how I felt sometimes. I think it is a very effective way to get students to participate."