

Clickers keep students engaged

By Joshua Dillen
The Clackamas Print

The power of education is growing and thriving at Clackamas Community College.

Thanks to the Continuous Learning Collaborative (CLC), students and faculty can be assured that the quality of education will always improve at CCC. The CLC was established in the fall of 2010. The driving force behind this is the combined efforts of Steve Beining, distance learning department chair and Kate Gray, English instructor, co-coordinators of CLC.

"Our [CLC] mission is to optimize the art and science of teaching to create the best possible learning experiences for CCC students," said Gray. "What we're about is looking at best practices within the classroom and online; to see how we can optimize what students are doing and how we can better serve them."

Faculty members at CCC can access a wealth of new teaching techniques, the latest in educational technologies and optimize their students learning experience, by attending the many sessions available through CLC. Faculty familiar with Moodle and NOTE, CCC's Network for Online Teaching Excellence, can link to CLC's current schedule on the NOTE website: <http://note.online.clackamas.edu/>. CLC and NOTE work together to develop and enhance any teaching style with the tools they provide. NOTE focuses on Moodle and provides conveniently scheduled training sessions for teachers.

Last Tuesday's presentation on "Clickers" by Kurt Lewandowski, CCC math instructor and senior member of the department for 21 years, had several faculty members in attendance amazed and intrigued by the capabilities these devices have.

"I love teaching, I'm a teacher first," said Lewandowski. "I enjoy helping people overcome their obstacles to achieve their goals."

It was very obvious that the use of clicker technology helps him accomplish this in his classroom. CLC and Lewandowski want the entire faculty at CCC to continuously develop and grow their teaching methods by sharing this and other new advances in educational technologies.

Clickers work he explained they are an "audience response system" that allows users to participate in whatever is being discussed. There are several brands; clickers are just a generic term. This technology helps instructors to track individual as well as overall understanding of the current lesson.

"It keeps students engaged. It's easy to kind of glaze over and start day dreaming out the window," he said.

By design, this system doesn't allow that lack of understanding that instructors can miss. It causes more learning because the students are almost involuntarily committed and involved in the lesson.

The simplicity and convenience was obvious after a very informative and interactive PowerPoint presentation. Interactive is the operative word. The clickers work



Dan Bailey The Clackamas Print

Kurt Lewandowski give a presentation on the use of clickers in the classroom and their effectiveness. Lewandowski has plans to use this new technology in some classes fall term and all classes winter term.

with PowerPoint and let an instructor see real time feedback from the participants. This allows immediate adjustment of a lesson. Students can be polled and quizzed with immediate access to understanding and comprehension.

The faculty attendees quickly experienced the advantage an instructor has when using clickers. This technology enabled them to answer questions and see the results directly on the screen; the hands-on demonstration was expertly guided by Lewandowski and included several lesson style examples of their versatility and convenience. Attendants of

the presentation were engaged and had a positive impression of the clickers.

"I'm sure it's going to be very helpful," said Rodica Gotur, part time math instructor at CCC. "I always encourage them [students] to participate."

Gotur plans to start using the clickers gradually through this term and will be implementing this tool in all of her classes next term.

Other CLC sessions last week included team building exercises and group project development for students. All members of the CCC community will benefit from the CLC.

Adult High School Program gives new alternatives to G.E.D.

By Isaac Soper
The Clackamas Print

As the years go by, students change along with their needs. According to the Department of Education, high school graduation rates are at 64.4 percent, which brings the question to mind, what are the others doing? There are many non-traditional high schools, such as charter high schools like Clackamas Middle College and other means to receive a diploma or GED, for students who have been "lost in the void" at traditional high schools or have had to leave school for whatever reason.

"Our programs here fill a very important niche at a community college. It is a very important strand so that students can pursue other classes at the college level," said Cathy Hanson, department chair of Clackamas Community College skills development.

CCC has offered many programs in the past for high school completion but as the years go by, those programs have decreased. The college currently offers the Adult High School Diploma program, which offers the chance for students who are over the age of 21 to receive a diploma, the Young Parent Opportunity Program (YPOP), for students between the ages of 15-21 who are either pregnant or parenting and looking for a high school diploma and the GED program.

"Some students may need from one term to two years [to complete their diploma]. Based on evaluation, we figure out how many credits they need. We work really hard with our students. It is a very focused program. We help them get their GED, but we help them set up a plan as well," said Hanson.

Another program that works directly with the college is Clackamas Middle College, which used to be located in a small building in the Hagen parking lot, but is

now located on 82nd Ave., CMC is considered a "charter" high school, in which students from any district can apply and finish their high school diploma while taking federally-funded college classes at either the main CCC campus or the Harmony campus.

"The main purpose of our school is to bridge the gap from high school to college and bring two educational systems together so that kids aren't falling between the gaps," said Brian Siem, principal of CMC.

CMC isn't worried about getting a student in and out of high school in four years. The main focus is to ready a student for the college experience and life afterwards, primarily focusing on skills that a student needs to excel in the world after high school.

Their program is split into three tiers, the first being primarily high school classes melded with learning objectives that are meant to help a student learn how to study, take notes and work on skills such as participation and critical thinking. The second tier allows a student to take a limited number of college courses for both high school and college credit. If a student is successful in both levels, they are granted the opportunity to take up to 12 credits of college courses, with \$700 per term allocated for classes, and \$450 per year allocated for books.

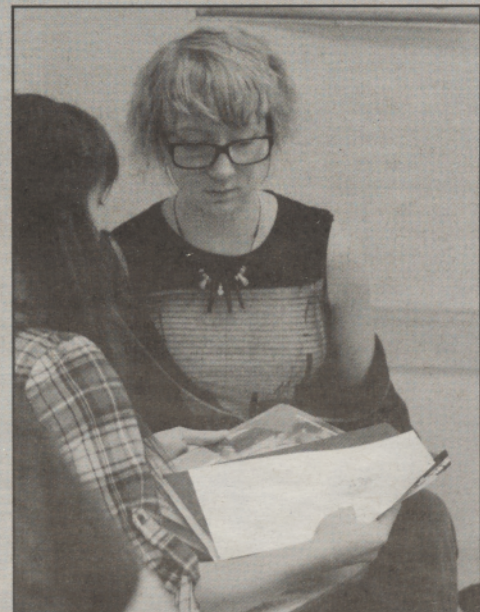
"We provide students with a family of support that they can rely on throughout and after high school, sometimes even beyond college. There are other early college programs, but there are no other schools like CMC," said Eric Stone, counselor at CMC.

With the possibility of entering the CMC program as a high school freshman, a student has the opportunity of taking up to four years of classes at CCC that are federally funded, to work toward and hopefully complete their Associate's Degree or certificate program.

"Our symbol is the bridge, students go from here to college, knowing they can come back for ongoing advice and

help. And they do come back 'home to CMC' to get that support to achieve their goals," said Stone.

Whether a student has been unable to complete their high school diploma or if the conventional high school setting isn't working, there are other opportunities available. For students under 21, CMC is a unique program that has a partnership with the college and for those over 21, CCC's GED program is a great opportunity as well.



Hichem Kerkour The Clackamas Print

Cosette LeMay and Mikhaela Dietch at Clackamas Middle College studying in class.