

# Classroom clickers keeps 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 it 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.

A recent 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 with PowerPoint and let an instructor see real time



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Kurt Lewandowski, Clackamas Community College math instructor, presents the benefits of using clickers in the classroom.

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. Attendees 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 include team building exercises and group project development for students. All members of the CCC community will benefit from the CLC.

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## WEBSITE: CCC site gets a face-lift

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Although according to some students, such as Joel Stalcup, the current Clackamas website has "Nothing really too bad about it," the new site is a vast improvement, with a much higher level of organization and ease of access.

According to Kim Carey, Chief Information Officer, to create the new website, the college contacted Datatel, a company that the college has been working with for approximately 10 years for their campus wide integrated database, which contains student information, financial data and the college's human resources system. In a statement made by Carey, the college reportedly paid "\$32,500 in services for them to do the redesign."

Although Datatel was the web developer of the upcoming website, there have been many members of the college staff that worked on different aspects of the site, including Dean of College Advancement Shelly Parini; Janet Paulson, marketing project coordinator; Steve Beining, department chair of the distance learning program; Kim Carey, dean

of chief information office; Dean Walch, website coordinator; Shawn Swanner, from the IT department; Tamara Barry, of Public affairs; student Sara Anderson and Dean of curriculum planning and research, Steffen Moller.

"One of the biggest issues we have with the current site is navigation. In working with Datatel, we were able to harness best practice design standards in helping the user find the information they are needing more quickly and without the frustration we have heard in the past," stated Walch.

Not only has the site been revamped to make information retrieval easier but the search engine has been upgraded as well, so that "Results will be better tuned to what the user is looking for," Walch stated.

According to Paulson, there is still quite a bit of work to be finished before the end of this year, including developing policies for the site, training staff to become familiar with the site, identifying departments which need web redesign and integrating a form of online communication.

"The public launch of the site is scheduled for January," stated Paulson.

## Staff

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19600 Molalla Ave.  
Oregon City, OR 97045

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### Contact Information

chiefed@clackamas.edu  
copyed@clackamas.edu  
newsed@clackamas.edu  
aced@clackamas.edu  
sportsed@clackamas.edu  
photoed@clackamas.edu  
admgr@clackamas.edu  
webeditor@clackamas.edu