

KERRY HENRICKSON, DEPARTMENT EDITOR

We are happy to welcome *ABT's* new Classroom Technology Reviews Editor,
Kerry Henrickson.

We thank José Vázquez who served in this capacity for the last 10 months.

—Editor

ACTIVE LEARNING SOFTWARE

Classroom Performance System RF 5.01. 2008. Developed by eInstruction, 308 North Carroll Blvd Denton, TX 76201. Software is free. For receiver and response pad pricing contact sales at <http://www.einstruction.com/Products/Pricing/request.cfm>.

PC System Requirements:

- Pentium II or faster processor
- One available USB port
- 256 MB of RAM, minimum
- Microsoft® Windows® 2000 with Service Pack 4 or Windows XP Professional or Home Edition with Service Pack 1 or Windows XP Professional or Home Edition with Service Pack 2

Macintosh System Requirements:

- Mac OS 10.3.9 or higher
- PowerPC G3 300 MHz or better processor, including Intel
- 256 MB of physical RAM (512 MB recommended)
- 200 MB of free hard disk space
- One open USB port
- 800 x 600 display, thousands of colors or better

The Classroom Performance System, Radio Frequency (CPS-RF) developed by eInstruction provides

instructors with easy-to-use software for instantaneously gathering student responses to verbal and written questions, and for collecting real-time data in the biology classroom using student response pads, or “clickers.”

Clickers are handheld electronic key pads that emit a radio frequency signal and allow students to respond individually to multiple-choice, true-false, and mathematical questions—either numerical or formulaic. Student responses to questions are collected by a radio frequency receiver using the CPS software, then tallied and reported as a histogram reminiscent of the audience polling used on the TV show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” The CPS-RF software and associated response clickers are easy to use for the student, and, with just a little patience, the instructor can be up and using clickers in his/her classroom in a matter of a couple hours.

A great use of clickers is for data collection. In my general biology for majors class, I have developed a dry genetics lab where students gather data from five family members or friends regarding the presence of such phenotypic characteristics as widow's peak, hitchhiker's thumb, freckles, etc. Students then report their results in class using their clicker. In less than five minutes, I can easily collect this information, then, with the class, discuss the data. It's the best way I've found to show students that dominant alleles are not necessarily the ones which are most frequent in the population.

Last year, eInstruction unveiled a much improved version of its CPS software. Now more intuitive to navigate, **CPS-RF v.5.01** offers new features such as the ability to give students loaner clickers for a single class session, improved attendance and grade book navigation, and a better visual layout. K-12 instructors will appreciate the CPS-RF ability to generate progress reports for students, as well as to link questions

with state standards to track student progress.

There are two ways of implementing CPS-RF in the classroom. In higher education classrooms, students typically are required to purchase and register (\$15 per semester) their response pad, and the instructor purchases the USB-based, RF receiver unit to use with the free software. In many cases, textbook publishing companies will supply instructors with the RF receiver unit for free with adoption of a textbook. In K-12 environments, 24 (or 36) clickers and one receiver are typically purchased together as a set and students are not required to purchase or register their clickers. In both scenarios, CPS-RF collects all students' responses, automatically grades the answers based on the instructor-generated key and uploads the results in the software's grade book. The CPS-RF grade book can be used alone, or grades can be exported as an Excel file. CPS-RF also takes attendance and keeps track of this so class time is focused on teaching and learning and not on housekeeping matters.

Instructors can use the CPS software to check in with students throughout class to ensure they comprehend the material and can apply concepts to novel scenarios. I use it to quickly administer quizzes at the beginning of each class and to collect and analyze results using the Reports feature. With CPS-RF, instructors can generate student-specific performance reports for clicker sessions, as well as reports of class-level performance.

Learning to use the CPS-RF software is easy with the help of the extensive online support portion of the eInstruction Web site, and, in my experience, the tech support staff is helpful and friendly. Free, online, interactive training sessions on using the CPS-RF software are offered almost every day at the eInstruction Web site and are worth attending if you would like to learn more about CPS-RF.

Kerry Henrickson

KERRY HENRICKSON, Ph.D., is the Department Chair of Sciences and an Anatomy and Physiology Instructor at Cochise College in Sierra Vista, AZ. She holds advanced degrees in biology, education, and journalism and is interested in how technology use and active learning in the classroom can help students succeed. Her address is: Department of Sciences, Cochise College, 901 N. Colombo Ave., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635; e-mail: henricksonk@cochise.edu.