Point Solutions: Best Practices and Tips

Point Solutions is a classroom response tool which can make lessons more interactive, facilitate discussions, guide lectures, encourage peer instruction, and allow for immediate student feedback. Consider the following practices when using the Point Solutions system.

◊ **Consult with the Instructional Technology Lab.** If you are considering using Point Solutions, we recommend that you meet with our staff before your first session. You can also refer to our Faculty Guides to learn more about what Point Solutions can do.

◊ **Create a Point Solutions Account and register it through Blackboard.** A Point Solutions Account is required to use Point Solutions products. However, creating and registering your account through Blackboard also allows you to tie together your polling sessions with student responses and export them to Blackboard's Grade Center.

◊ **Get to know your classroom.** Confirm that your classroom is equipped to use Point Solutions. If possible, do a run-through of your presentation in your classroom to intercept potential problems. For assistance, contact the Academic Technologies Solutions Center at (202) 994-7900.

◊ **Set clear goals.** Identify how often clickers will be used in class and how the polling should support student learning. We do not recommend that you use Point Solutions solely for attendance-taking purposes. For an example of how to utilize Point Solutions effectively, refer to techniques for Peer Instruction.

◊ **Setup well-balanced polling.** Keep your informational slides interspersed judiciously with interactive slides, and don't overload a polling question with answer choices. Be sure to ask questions sparingly but strategically, to highlight the concepts you most want to emphasize. If you are a first-time user, start with just one or two questions per class.

◊ **Keep your first session simple.** For your first session, consider building an ungraded activity that involves simple question types like True/False or Multiple Choice to alleviate stress for students and verify the software and clicker devices are functioning. Also, keep in mind that a first-time session may take more time than usual as students learn how to use Point Solutions.

◊ **Tell students where to go for help.** Instruct students to contact you immediately if they have trouble registering or their responses are not being recorded. Especially if you are grading them, you don't want too much time to pass before they seek help. You might also consider including Point Solutions information in your syllabus to better prepare your students.

◊ **Update your participant list frequently.** It is best to update your participant list regularly to guarantee students receive credit for their participation as they add, drop, and register clickers throughout the semester.

◊ **Save your sessions.** Remember to save your session results before you close Point Solutions. Session data is key to reviewing student performance later in Point Solutions reports or exporting grades to Blackboard. Point Solutions will prompt you to save session data when you try to exit the program.

◊ **Send polling scores to Blackboard's Grade Center regularly.** If students receive credit for participation in polling sessions, export the session data into your Blackboard Grade Center frequently to help them quickly identify if you recorded their response activity.