ACAAI Tips for Using Audience Response Systems (ARS)

Audience Response Systems are devices that can assist a presenter to make learning more interactive. It can be used to effectively engage larger audiences. To avoid over or underuse, we suggest the following to make your presentation a success.

Step 1: Choose the reason(s) why you would use ARS[1]

1. Explore Pre-Existing Knowledge
   a. Test background knowledge prior to beginning
   b. Identify misperceptions
   c. Identify appropriate level of instruction

2. Activate Learning
   a. Play a learning "game"
   b. Stimulate thinking and learning
   c. Give everyone a chance to participate
   d. Trigger discussion
   e. Provide a change of pace/stimulus
   f. Establish collaborative relationship
   g. Help learners identify what is important
   h. Establish clear understanding of assessment criteria
   i. Overcome identified weaknesses of traditional lectures
   j. Generate a need to know by posing questions but not providing the correct answer(learners would have to find it on their own)

3. Provide a Mechanism for Getting Honest Answers to Sensitive Questions

4. Check for/Promote Understanding & Give Feedback
   a. Provide immediate feedback to learners about their performance
   b. Help learners identify areas in which they need to improve
   c. Check for understanding before moving to the next major point
   d. Assess understanding of a picture, chart, or other graphic
   e. Check for understanding at the end of a session
   f. Explain why answer options are correct or incorrect
   g. Conduct a review session

5. Practice Solving Problems
   a. Check ability to apply knowledge to a problem
   b. Promote/assess application of learning to a new kind of problem or context
   c. Promote/assess ability to put things together (synthesize)
   d. Assess ability to select appropriate action from among several choices
   e. Check whether learners can identify next logical step in a process
   f. Ask learners to predict a result

6. Identify Values, Attitudes, and Opinions
   a. Get learners' opinions on an issue
   b. Identify controversial issues

      c.   Pose questions related to ethical issues
      d.   Identify learner levels of confidence related to a particular action/skill

7. Check for Convergence or Divergence
      a.   Generate potential solutions/approaches and take a vote
      b.   Check level of consensus

8. Get Feedback from Learners
      a.   Evaluate a learning experience
      b.   Provide teacher feedback to improve teaching practices

Step 2: Once you know the reason(s) you want to use an ARS, follow these guidelines:

1. Ask Purposeful Questions. There should be a clear purpose for every question you ask. Choose to use ARS when your intent is to:
   a. cause the audience to think about an issue
   b. clarify group ideas and beliefs
   c. quantify interest
   d. uncover misunderstandings
   e. measure increases in learning

2. Ask Meaningful Questions. Chose questions that are of high interest to the audience even if they are only marginal interest to the presenter.

3. Acknowledge Audience Polling Results. Never ignore the results. Present and then discuss the results because even though everyone sees the same data, many interpret it differently. Don't just prepare to how you expect the audience to respond.

4. Keep Questions Short and Simple. Avoid long or complicated questions. Questions should be concise and the audience response choices need to be equally clear.

5. Rehearse. It takes 15-30 seconds to collect audience responses. Determine when to cut off audience polling and show the results especially with a large group. Results can be presented in a variety of ways . Test questions and response displays in advance to ensure they are presented in a format both the presenters and audience understand.

6. Don't Overuse Audience Polling. Use a variety of methods to keep audience polling fresh but try to use the same audience response choices as much as you can. For example, if you use scales (for example, 1-5 where 1=worst and 5=best) keep the measurement the same across multiple questions

7. Keep the Polling Screens Clear. Don't use unnecessary screen elements and backgrounds or colors that make the question and results hard to see.

8. Keep results. Don't erase the questions and results as this documentation assists ACAAI in its compliance with CME requirements.