How to use TurningPoint

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Introduction

The place of formative assessment within learning has long been established (Draper, 2009, Nicol and Mcfarlane-Dick, 2006) and electronic voting systems (EVS) are an easy to use technology that allows lecturers to incorporate regular formative questioning into their teaching sessions. One of the key benefits of using EVS are that large class sizes are not a barrier to their use (Campbell & Mayer). Experience within the Faculty of Health & Human Sciences has demonstrated that they can be used to create a level of stimulation and interactivity that increases the student's learning even in large groups.

There are several different systems available, and the simplest of them require almost no more knowledge than creating a PowerPoint™ presentation. Typically an EVS comprises four elements. A tool for presenting lecture content and questions (e.g. a computer, PowerPoint™ and a digital projector) is required. Handsets (or clickers) which resemble TV remote control units, enable students to respond to a lecturer's questions. A small, simple receiver collects and records students' individual responses and software collates and presents the responses (Educause, 2005). Both students and the lecturer receive immediate feedback on the student's understanding of the material being taught. This allows the students to recognise areas for further study and gives the lecturer the opportunity to immediately clarify areas of misunderstanding or confusion (Lorimer & Hilliard, 2009).

TurningPoint is one type of electronic voting system (EVS). You need to install the software to write voting questions (there is no licence limit for the installation). One type of handset (respond card) has a multiline screen to display your answer, menu, presentation mode, channel setup, etc.
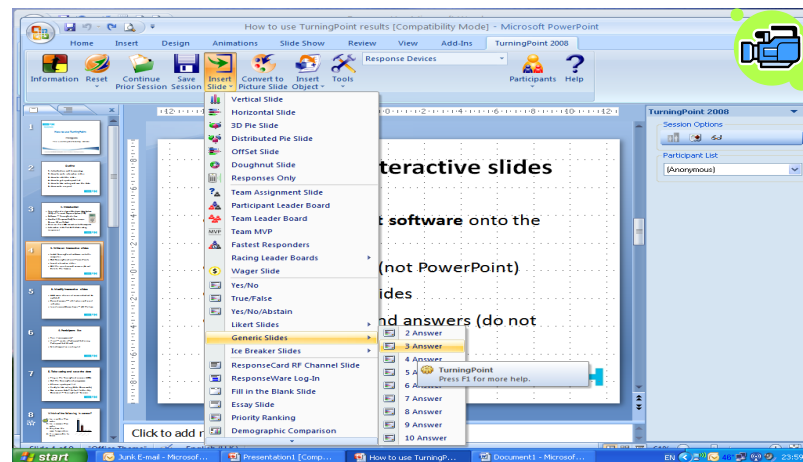

Each handset has a unique ID on the back, which can be identified by the receiver during voting. The receiver has a USB connection to the computer.

For screen capture video click the link here.
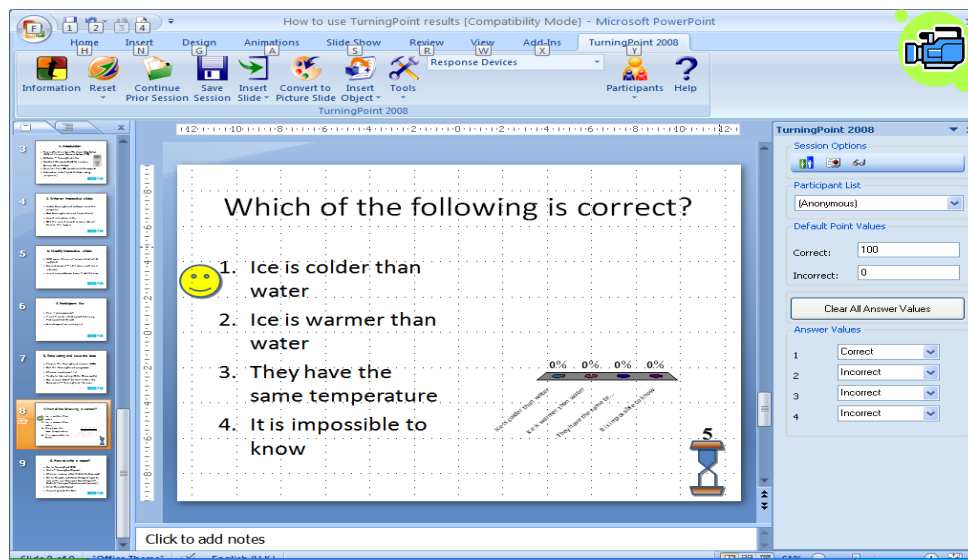
Write an interactive slide in TurningPoint

You can open existing PowerPoint slides in TurningPoint, but only Interactive Slides can take voting. You can insert such slides in the 'TurningPoint 2008' by clicking 'Insert Slide'. There are many types of slides. You can start with an easy one, for example, 'generic' with 3 answers (see the screen shot).

The inserted interactive slide has three areas: question, answer and chart. Question and answer areas can be edited, but none of them can be deleted.
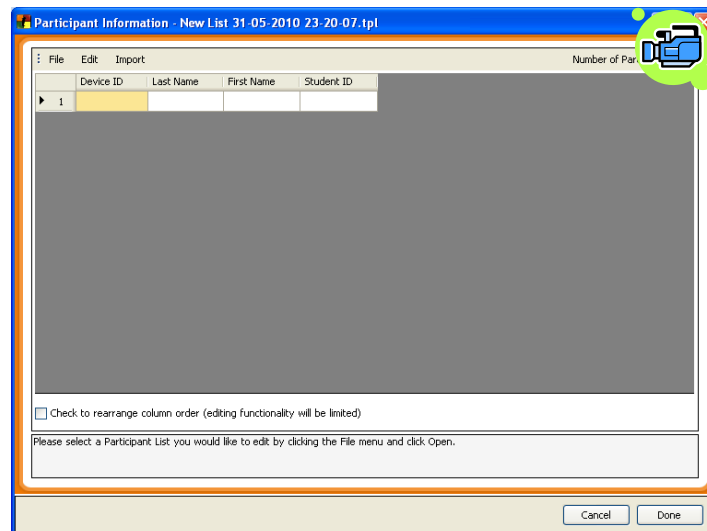
Modify the interactive slide

More choices of answer can added, and the chart will be updated automatically. A correct answer indicator and countdown timer can also be added.
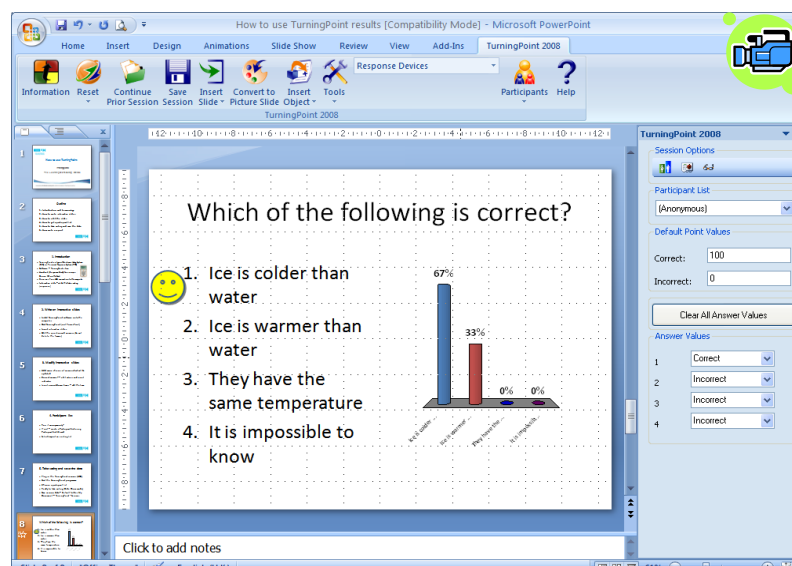
Participant list

You can run the voting anonymously (as default), or you need to create/import a participant list. The basic fields in a participant list include Device ID (unique, on the back of the handset), Last Name, First Name and Student ID. More fields can be added, and also groups can be defined.
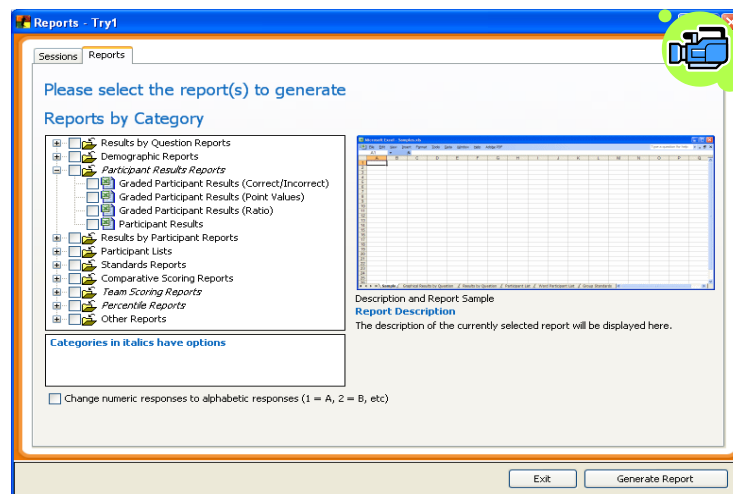

Taking votes and saving the data

The interactive slides can be run (taking votes) under 'Slide Show'.

The number of responses will be displayed on the top right corner. The countdown timer can be activated by a mouse click. If the handset was pressed more than once, the last choice will be valid. When the voting is finished, a chart will be presenting the percentage of each choice. With another mouse click the correct answer will be displayed. Session data should be saved for future analyses.

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Write a report in TurningPoint

If you go to 'TurningPoint 2008', then go to 'Tools' and choose 'Reports', you can see that there are many different types of report that can de generated. First of all you need to choose the session data that the report is based on. Then choose the type of report, for example, 'Participant Results Report', and tick 'Graded Participant Results…', and 'Generate Report'. The report will be seen as an Excel file ready for subsequent analysis
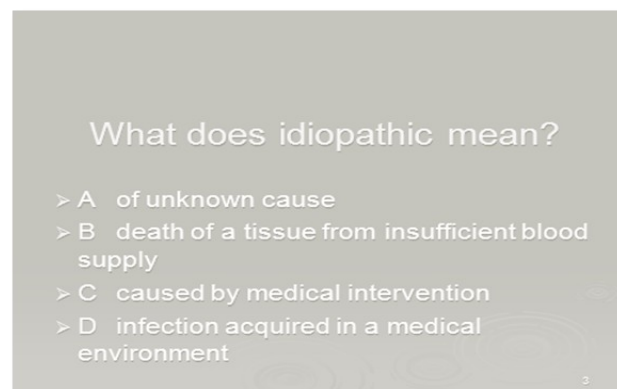

For PowerPoint footage of Promethean click the link here

For an audio commentary on Promethean click the link here

Using Promethean in your Teaching

You can use a standard PowerPoint presentation to create your questions. The activate system has up to a maximum of six buttons available for answer options. On the handsets these are labelled A to F. It works well to use a slide format with title and contents, putting the question in the title area. You will need to make sure you leave enough room above your question for the voting indictor boxes to appear. This is important to bear in mind when considering the length of your question.

Promethean handset or 'pod'.

Booking the Equipment

The Promethean Activote equipment is booked as a standard piece of teaching equipment. It is kept within LIS in the College Lane LRC. The resource includes a lap-top with the software and a maximum of 64 handsets. These are kept in two cases each containing 32 handsets (or pods). When you book the equipment you will need to specify how many handsets you require (32 or 64). Voting systems work well when students share a handset between two or three as well as when they have an individual one. When completing the booking form you can request technical support to get you started. It does take a few minutes to set up the equipment and distribute the handsets.
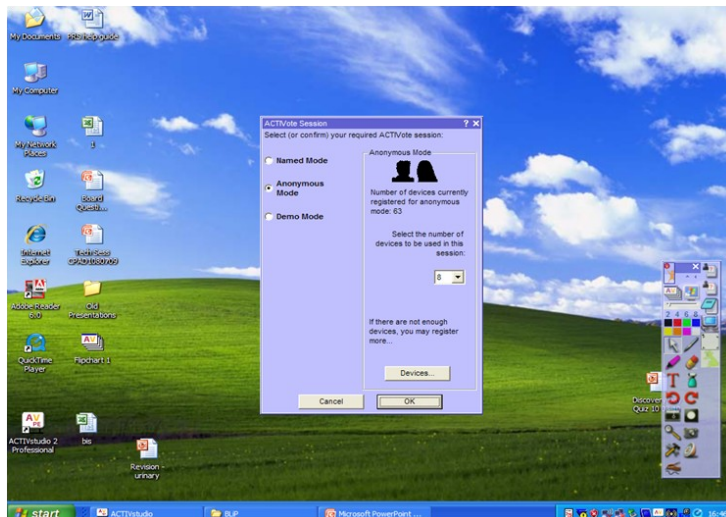
In the classroom

You will need to set up and switch on the lap-top as normal, making sure you remember to connect the data projector. The ACTIVhub, which receives the signals plugs into the back of the lap top in a standard USB socket. When you have connected it the six orange LED's will spin around while the system sets up. When the orange LED's stop spinning and the central white LED illuminates you are ready to start.

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You click on the ACTIVstudio 2 professional icon on the bottom left corner of the desktop. The opens the tool box displayed on the right. You then need to click on the menu icon in the top right hand corner of the tool box. It looks the same as the image below.
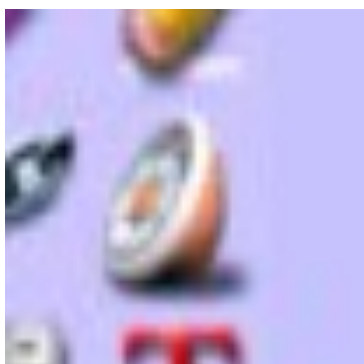

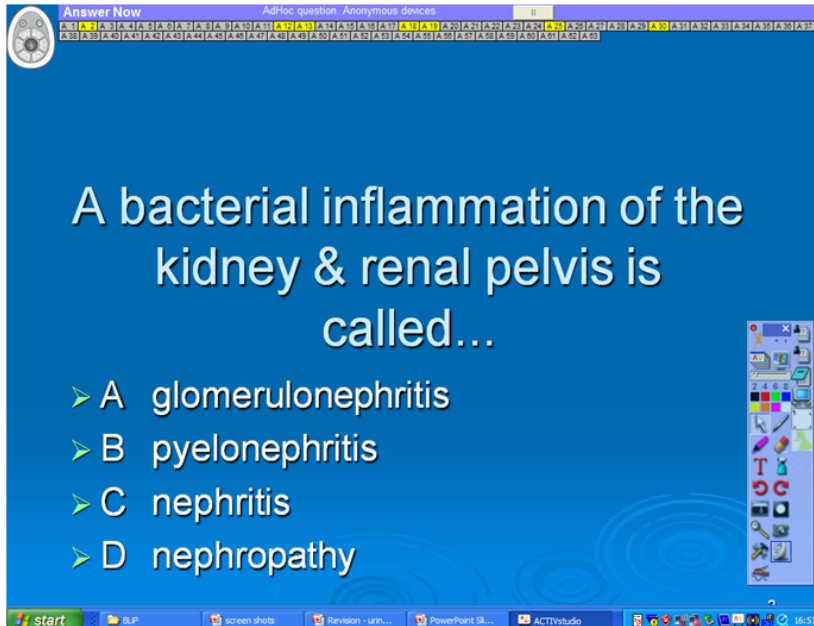From here you click on Activote and then Session.

You select anonymous mode and then the number of handsets you will be using (up to a maximum of 64). Clicking OK sets the software to start.
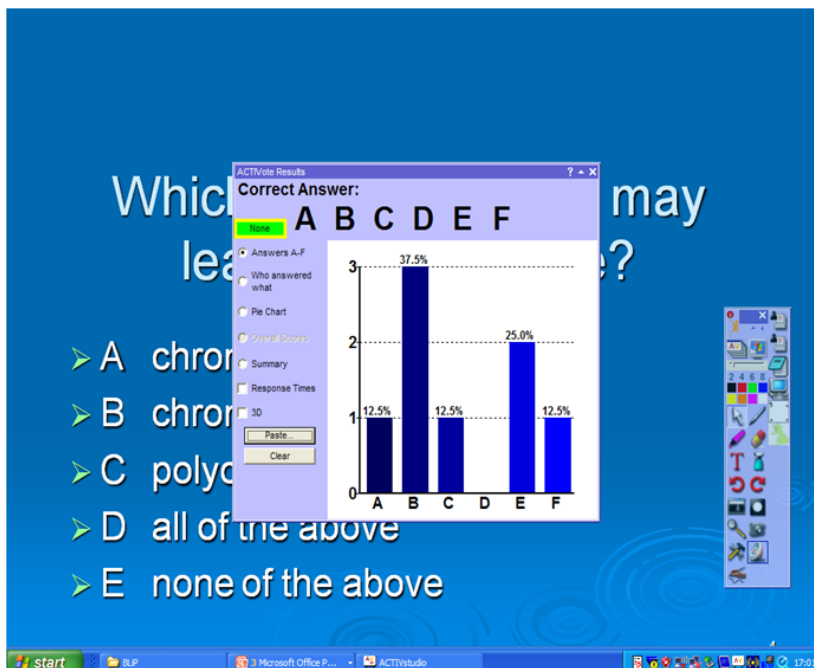
Now open your PowerPoint and bring up your first question slide. If the toolbox does not appear, right clicking the mouse on the screen will make it visible. When your question slide is displayed click on the pod symbol illustrated below.

This will make the voting answer indicator appear and you can ask your students to vote for the correct answer. As the students vote the number of the handset they are holding turns from grey to yellow.

Having allowed the students' time to answer the question you are now ready to display the results of the poll. Clicking on the pod symbol as you did before will display a histogram of the results.

When you have discussed the results of the voting move to your next PowerPoint slide, click on the pod icon on the tool box and you are ready for the next question.

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Draper S (2009) Catalytic assessment: understanding how MCQs and EVS can foster deep learning *British Journal of Educational Technology* Vol 40 No 2 p285-293

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Lorimer J, Hilliard A. (2009) Incorporating Learning Technologies into Undergraduate Radiography Education. *Radiography* Vol 15 No 3 214-219

Nicol DJ, Macfarlane-Dick D (2006) Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice *Studies in Higher Education* 31, 2, 199-216