

INTRODUCING WIRELESS ELECTRONIC VOTING IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

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Focus: Implementing classroom technology at a large scale in the curriculum.

Electronic voting is an interesting classroom technology. Using on-the-spot voting changes one-way interaction using a standard presentation into a two-way communication tool which motivates and involves the audience to active participation. It also provides the teacher immediate feedback on the students level of understanding or their opinions.

In daily practice voting is often performed using physical wired or wireless voting keypads. This technique has some logistic disadvantages concerning providing, collecting or perhaps lending out the devices to the users involved. However, already at this very moment and surely in the near future students in higher education will use their own personal device for numerous tasks in the private as well as the educational domain. As an example, laptops for every student are already compulsory at the Leiden University Medical Center and will become so at the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam in the next few years. But also PDA's and smart phones are clearly used increasingly.

From this point of view, both institutions are working on a collective project to implement wireless electronic voting in medical education using students own portable devices. First faculty of both schools defined functional and technical requirements to select suitable voting software. Next a small experiment was performed by a few faculty members to test the selected software in a small group of students. Starting September 2007 the technique will be introduced in all classes during the pre-clinical phase of the medical curriculum in both schools.

Parallel to this implementation a training program for faculty members has been developed. In this course teachers are trained in the technical aspects of the software but most importantly on the educational aspects on using on-the-spot voting during large and small scale classroom activities.

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