

A Few Good Clicker Apps

“If you ask one question, it will lead you to another, and another, and another. It’s like peeling an onion.” — Lemony Snicket

Clicker apps have become popular for several reasons. They can entice many students to respond to questions—and as the testing-effect research strongly suggests, answering questions promotes learning. The apps replace dedicated clickers since students respond with any digital device, typically phones. The “big three” also have free starter versions and function similarly:

- The instructor opens an account, creates a quiz there, and gives students a code enabling them to respond. Students don’t need accounts.
- Instructors use a single account for all quizzes they create.
- In class, a question appears on the screen, students use their devices to respond, the instructor shows the percent choosing each answer— and then pauses to discuss misconceptions.

Subtle differences among the free versions of the apps--summarized in the table—mean that one app may be a better choice for a specific class than another. Instructors often begin by using these apps as “no-stakes” activities for informal assessment. There’s plenty of benefit there, and little angst if something goes awry

	# of Students	Question Types	Results Display	Other Features
Kahoot https://kahoot.com/	depends on wi-fi strength	T/F, M/C questions	Bar graph	The most “gamified” option: scoring uses speed and accuracy. A leaderboard spurs competition. Has tight word limits on questions and answers.
Socrative https://www.socrative.com/	50	T/F, M/C or short-answer	Pie chart	Also offers a contest among teams and an online “minute paper.” Handles higher order questions better than Kahoot.
Polleverywhere https://www.polleverywhere.com/	30	T/F, M/C or short-answer	Many choices, including word clouds and graphs	Smooth interface with PowerPoint, making it easy to spread questions through a session. More powerful, but more of a learning curve.

Want to know more? Derek Bruff, an expert on classroom response systems, offers a solid discussion of good practice in this area: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/clickers/>