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**CEP 800**  
**Technology Review**

**Description of the tool:** [Socrative](#) is a student response system I recently started using that allows teachers to post multiple choice and short answer questions for students to respond to in real time. It is free to any educator and allows up to 50 students to interact at a time from any Internet device.

**1. What is being learned? What are the underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge?**

Socrative is a tool that can be used for any content area. The learning goals are less about specific content knowledge and more about giving the teacher and the students instant feedback on their current understanding of any topic. This tool can also help with improving test-taking strategies (such as eliminating incorrect answers) which is something my students struggle with significantly.

**2. What are the affordances for how knowledge/information is being represented? What are the constraints?**

One of the best parts in my opinion about using a student response system is that students feel comfortable and confident participating without their answer being tied publicly to their name. Students love getting the chance to use their own technologies to participate (tablets, computers, iPods), and this automatically makes them more engaged in the material. When using this in class before, I have had my students say "this is fun, can we review this way more often?" whereas they have never asked me to do another lecture! It also helps me as the teacher make a formative assessment of whether or not students are understanding the material. With multiple choice questions, it enables you to see exactly where they are going wrong in their thinking (if you have written the questions well, of course) :).

**3. How does learning take place? What elements of constructivism or behaviorism did you observe?**

Learning takes place in several ways. Students can work independently or in teams to come up with correct answers. When they work in teams, I often hear them discussing their processes in working through a problem and "arguing" over who has worked through the problem correctly (which I love to hear as a teacher!). This would definitely be an example of constructivism. Students also gain practice at taking multiple choice tests, and as I continue to use Socrative, they learn to interpret questions better and they become more adept test-takers - which would be an example of behaviorism.

#### **4. What role does technology play? What advantages or disadvantages does the technology hold for this role? What unique contribution does the technology have in facilitating learning?**

The main role of the technology that Socrative provides is that it gives instant feedback. There are many settings the teacher can apply (such as whether or not the student is told if their answer is correct, or if the quiz is student- or teacher-paced) in order to tweak the program to work for his or her classroom and the learning experience. It can be used as a review game, an exit ticket, or just a pulse check to see if students understood a particular concept. In a traditional setting, some students are afraid to tell the teacher if they do not understand, particularly in front of the whole class. Using Socrative, I have found that students will be much more honest about their understanding.

#### **5. How does it fit within existing school curriculum?**

Socrative is not intended to do anything more than give additional feedback to both teachers and students. I believe it is a great tool for teaching students to be more reflective of their learning, and it also encourages teachers to be more reflective of their teaching ("Did the instructional method I used today actually work for my students?").

#### **6. Do any traces of "Web 2.0" appear with this technology? If so, how does it enhance/distract from the experience?**

There are definitely some "traces" of Web 2.0 with Socrative. Although it definitely involves the interactive piece by uploading user responses in real time, it does not really provide opportunities for students to truly communicate with

each other online. There is no forum or texting component. I actually like this a lot because it still gives us opportunities to have discussions in class based on the results of each quiz question. And my students work together and communicate out loud as they are determining which answer is correct, which I still believe is an extremely valid skill.

## **7. How are important differences among learners taken into account?**

I think Socrative is an excellent tool for differentiating among different learners. In particular, I think this technology does not make anyone feel "stupid" for not knowing the correct answer because there is no name tied to each response. It is a great way to discuss learning from your mistakes with your students.

## **8. What do teachers and learners need to know? What demands are placed on teachers and other "users?" What knowledge is needed? What knowledge supports does the innovation provide?**

On the homepage, Socrative brags that it is "Super easy to use" and takes only 3 minutes to set up. Although I consider myself fairly tech-savvy, I would agree that it is easy to use. They have great directions and "help" buttons if you do not understand how to set up a quiz. They also have a hands-on demo that you can try to see how the different components of the program work. It is very user intuitive for both the teacher, and the students using it. I have used it several times in my classroom and my students have not had any issues connecting to my "room" or answering questions. All of my students love the interactive piece and enjoy working both independently and collaboratively to answer the questions.