

In-Class Polling Comparison Guide

Some polling tools may not be free campus-wide and/or lack [Third Party Risk Management \(TPRM\) approval](#). These tools might offer unique functionalities or features that could benefit the teaching and learning process, but it is essential to exercise caution and adhere to specific strategies and guidelines to protect our students when considering their usage in the classroom. This guide provides strategies for incorporating polling technology into class sessions as well as compares the different polling platforms instructors might use. Review the [disclaimer](#) at the end of this document for more information.

Pedagogical value

1. All students can participate — even in large classes.
2. Everyone can see the responses in real time (with different ways to visualize the results from multiple choice, true/false, and open-ended questions).
3. Gauge level of understanding.
4. Generate interaction and discussions from results.

Have you ever wanted to gather responses to a question from multiple students simultaneously? In-class polling can be a great way to run a quick knowledge check to see if students understood a topic from the lecture or reading — and it's also a great way to prime students for small and large group discussion.

Think back to when you last asked “does anyone have any questions?” and you were received with silence. Students may be shy or don’t know what questions to ask. Polling them anonymously, even if you are simply asking “did you understand why x happened?” is a great way to check in with your students.

You can also encourage students to apply more critical thought with questions such as, “based on what we talked about, what do you think is the trend in the next six months?” Ask your students to answer the question, then show the students the results. Follow up by asking one student, “why do you think your classmates chose this answer over another answer?” and build your discussion around this. You don’t need to ask the student to explain their response choice, but rather ask them to analyze the responses from the class results.

Another way to use in-class polling is to ask students to respond to a poll, then after they have submitted their responses, ask them to turn to their neighbor and explain why they selected that answer. In addition, ask the student to argue for one of the answers they did not pick with the neighbor. Then ask the students to answer the same poll question again and ask who changed their response from the first time. You can also follow up by asking the students to verbally explain what has changed (but don’t ask them to explain what answer they picked).

If technology (like the clickers) fails, you can still ask them to select a response, then turn to their peers to discuss. Ask them the same questions again and ask “who changed their responses from the first time around and what has changed?”

Best practices for in-class polling

1. Make sure students are on a reliable internet connection.
2. For remote learning, prompt the students when to start polling and remind them to return to the Zoom window and/or put other browsers or devices out of view when polling is done.
3. Start with [a check-in ice breaker question](#) as the first polling exercise to give students a chance to test out the technology.
4. Ask “why” and “how” questions.
5. Use a combination of simple and more complex questions.
6. Do you need to capture who responded to what? Make poll questions anonymous to allow students to be “heard.”
7. Plan to allow students who are not in the room a chance to answer the questions (allowing remote and/or absent students to benefit too).
8. Give students time to answer the questions, don’t expect an answer right away, but let the students know how long they have to provide a response.
9. Explain to students why you are using in-class polling. If you don’t, they often assume your goal is to track their attendance.

How to pair polling with think-pair-share & peer instruction:

One effective way to generate interaction and discussion from online polling is by pairing the activity with [Think-Pair-Share](#) to stimulate peer instruction and engagement. This can work well for polling questions with a single correct answer as well as open-ended dilemmas.

A peer instruction activity might unfold as follows (adapted from [Science Edventures](#)):

1. The instructor poses a thought-provoking question, posing two-to-five directions for further analysis as poll choices or collecting free text responses from students.
2. Students submit their answers using polling software.
3. Instructor says, “Hmm, really interesting to see you choosing different directions. Please turn to your neighbor, tell them why you picked the choice you made. Support your choice with evidence from the course materials.”
4. The students pair and discuss.
5. At this point, choose the path that makes sense for your course:
 - a. If there is a single correct response to the poll question, re-launch the poll to assess what students learned from discussion with their peers. Debrief results with the class.
 - b. If there is not a correct answer, it may not be necessary to poll students a second time. The discussion was a chance to summon the evidence and practice putting together an argument. When the class reconvenes, the instructor leads a lively, class-wide discussion drawing out the students’ evidence for each of the paths forward.
6. Optional: Some instructors conclude a polling-based discussion activity by sharing a list of all the points they hoped would be uncovered during peer instruction / whole group discussion and reviews that list with the class.

For additional strategies for incorporating peer instruction with polling, see [Vickrey, et al 2015](#).

Types of polling options

(See the [Comparison chart in page 5](#))

Google Forms

Google Forms are a great way to create polls and have easy access to the results. Google Forms are free and can be easily created and saved in Google Drive. Google Forms work on all devices that have a browser. There are a variety of question types, including: Multiple Choice, Select All That Apply, Dropdown, Linear Scale, Multiple Choice Grid, Select All That Apply Grid, Short Answer, and Long Answer. You can embed files, images, and videos in the form. There are also a variety of settings that control collecting email addresses, anonymous/non-anonymous responses, and assigning point values (e.g., for quizzes).

An easy way to connect a Google Form to a presentation is through a QR code that students can scan with their phones and access the Google Form. There are a variety of free QR code generators online, such as [bit.ly's QR Code Generator](#). Results can be shared through the Google Form itself or exported to a Google Sheet.

If you wish to embed a Google Form into your Bruin Learn course site, you will need to retrieve the [embed code from Google Form](#) and [embed the iframe code into a page using the rich-content editor](#) in your Bruin Learn site.

[How to Use Google Forms](#)

[Google Apps for UCLA](#) – If you haven't activated your g.ucla.edu account

iClicker

You can start polling at any time, no need to author or import questions in iClicker ahead of time. iClicker will take a screenshot of your screen the moment you start your poll. To capture your question in the screenshot, you can have your questions written into your slides, or you can add a note of your question. Starting February 2025, [iClicker Events](#) have been enabled for UCLA accounts, allowing the audience to participate without creating an iClicker account.

As of Summer 2023, iClicker is free for [students and instructors via iClicker Cloud](#). Students do not need to create an iClicker Cloud account and can sign into iClicker with their UCLA login. To get started, download the iClicker Student app on their devices, or sign into iclicker.com from a web browser, and use wifi/data connection to poll in class. Physical [Remote iClickers](#) will continue to work with iClicker Cloud.

Starting January 2024, [iClicker Classic is moving to iClicker Cloud](#).

For iClicker questions and to get an instructor base, reach out to Melissa O'Brien, melissa.obrien@macmillan.com.

For iClicker and Bruin Learn questions, reach out to [your local support](#).

[iClicker Cloud Campus Resources](#)

[Guide to setting up iClicker from UCLA CEILS](#)

Poll Everywhere

This is the only live polling tool that accepts responses from a web browser, app, and SMS. The institution/instructor needs to purchase a license, which means the cost is not passed onto the student. With a paid license, you can speak directly to a Poll Everywhere support team whenever you have a product question. A free license is still available, however, you are limited to 40 responses per poll question (create an

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account in Poll Everywhere with your UCLA email address for the [Higher ed version](#)), and you cannot have restricted polls (to track attendance).

Send students to your personalized Poll Everywhere page where you can show one poll question at a time or many questions (using the Survey tool). When you activate a poll, your personalized Poll Everywhere page automatically updates to show the poll that you activated. You can also [pin an additional poll question](#) that is launched simultaneously with an active poll.

Poll Everywhere polls can be launched within Google Slides, Powerpoint, and Keynote. Polls can also be launched from your slides in Zoom's Share Screen, please be sure to follow the instructions for [present activities in a slide presentation during an online meeting](#).

For Poll Everywhere Licensing questions, reach out to Chibby Onyeador: chibby@polleverywhere.com
[Poll Everywhere's website](#) - Sign up or create a free account
[Instructor guide](#)

UCLA Online Polling Tool (OPT)

Developed by UCLA's Office of Advanced Research (OARC), this polling tool is completely free and is available to UCLA faculty, staff, and students. OPT works on all devices that have a browser. Additionally, access to the polls can be limited to those who have a UCLA logon.

Each time you want to poll, a new URL will be generated for you to share with your students. You can show one or many poll questions at a time.

[UCLA Online Polling Tool's website](#) – Login with your UCLA logon and create polls
[OPT Poll Creator/Instructor Quick Guide](#)
[OPT Poll Creator User Guide](#)

Zoom

Zoom comes with a built-in polling tool that is included with the UCLA Zoom license. The polling options are limited to multiple choice and true/false questions. Students do not need to open a new browser or launch another app in order to poll.

[UCLA Zoom's website](#) – Login with your UCLA logon, navigate to your meeting, and add a poll
[Polling for meetings](#)

Wifi in classrooms

Wifi on UCLA's campus is robust and [connectivity will depend on the wireless network](#) you are connected to. In the event you find that you and your students are having internet connectivity issues in the classroom, please Report Wi-Fi Issues, call (310) 267-**HELP** (4357), or email help@it.ucla.edu.

Comparison chart

Feature	Google Form	iClicker	Poll Everywhere	UCLA OPT	Zoom
Cost (who pays?)	Free	Free via UCLA subscription	\$349 - \$10,000+ Institution/Instructor	Free	Free
Audience polling without account creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Graded polls	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Classroom polling (<i>Multiple choice, Short answer, Numeric</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (Multiple choice only)
Advanced polling question types (<i>Target/Heat Map, Long Answer</i>)	✓ (Long Answer only)	✓	✓	✓	
Quizzing/Self-Paced polling and Asynchronous polling	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Anonymous polling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Word clouds		✓	✓	✓	
Competitions			✓		
Bruin Learn Integration	Forms do not embed	✓	✓ (some units)	On hold	Polls do not embed
Pre-registered participants		✓	✓	✓	✓
Google slides, Powerpoint, and Keynote (<i>for PC and Mac Integrations</i>)			✓		
Response via browser	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Response via app		✓	✓		✓
Response via SMS			✓		
Roster & Gradebook		✓	✓		
Attendance tracking via geolocation		✓	✓		
Online Gradebook (<i>Access your gradebook from any computer</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Weighted grading	✓	✓	✓		
Response Reporting	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Excel exports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teams and shared activities		✓	✓		
Demographics/Segmentation of responses			✓		
Student Study Guide	✓	✓	✓		
Requires internet connection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
User access control	✓	✓	✓		
Live moderation	✓		✓		
Customizable logo, background, image, colors	✓		✓		
Success manager & custom training		✓	✓		
WCAG 2.0 AA compliant and have VPAT document	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Additional resources

CEILS' [In-Class Polling guide](#)

Poll Everywhere's [Education Blog](#)

Macmillian Learning Community with a [focus on iClickers](#)

[6 Tips for Creating Engaging Active Learning Experiences Online](#)

[iClicker and Poll Everywhere comparison](#)

Questions or would like a consultation? Contact us at consult@teaching.ucla.edu.

Disclaimer

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If instructors choose to utilize these tools, it is imperative that they strictly adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Under no circumstances should any student's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or sensitive student data be collected, stored, or processed. Failure to do so could lead to violations of student privacy rights and potential legal consequences.

Tools managed centrally by campus IT services have undergone the TPRM (Third-Party Risk Management) process and have been approved for use.

Further, tools that are not part of UCLA's centrally managed ecosystem are limited in how they can be supported. Oftentimes, support will have to be obtained almost exclusively from the vendor, which can be frustrating and lead to implementation challenges or unforeseen costs on the part of instructors or the students.

UCLA IT Services is interested in expanding the tools available to support equitable and accessible participation and engagement in ways that align with and support the teaching strategies that instructors identify to deliver their courses. We would like to partner with the UCLA community in exploring new learning technologies, piloting and evaluating their efficacy and safety. Please visit the [Bruin Learn CoE Tools & Service page](#) to learn more.