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My implementation of ActiVote clickers into my social studies class went very well! During the lesson, it took a few minutes to explain and practice using the clickers, but my students learned quickly. When I was teaching the technology, I used positive reinforcement and modeling to make sure students understood my expectations and how to appropriately use the technology. We set up group norms (what to do if you’re done, what to do if your clicker isn’t working, etc) to minimize disruptions during the lesson itself. My previous experience with technology has become frustrating when students don’t know the procedure for problem solving and come to me looking for answers.

My lesson plan changed between the original version and the version I taught to my students. Based on a recommendation, I created a set of questions that assessed students’ level of comfort on the material related to my social studies topic. I presented the same questions after the unit to see if their opinions had changed. This was a great tool for me, as well as for them, to see how they felt about the material compared to what their answer choices indicated in regards to mastery. Besides that change, my lesson remained the same. I used ActiVote clickers to foster more student engagement in a social studies review session. My students are 81 5th graders in a diverse charter school. They loved the new technology. To account for diverse learners, I had planned some extension questions for those who clicked immediately to give other students time to think. For each question, I gave students one minute to read and answer. Then I could read the questions aloud to those who needed it. If a student knew the answer within the first few seconds, they could talk to a peer about an extension question. This seems very simple, but for students who need more time to process, this is essential.

Overall, I would say the technology had a great impact on student learning. I chose this technology to help enhance the learning of a particular topic. The lesson was not intended to replace another lesson, but to supplement and make a review session more engaging. Social studies is not the most interesting topic for many students. The implementation of the ActiVote clickers created much more of an opportunity to engage more learners. They also forced everyone to participate in the review, instead of me calling on a few students. Even if they were clicking random answers, they had to be “doing” something during the lesson instead of sitting passively. The increased engagement and responsibility is what I believe to be the greatest benefit of using this piece of technology. Students were also able to see how they were doing on questions in comparison to their peers, and I was able to conduct formative assessment simultaneously. I wouldn’t say that using this technology is essential in learning content, but the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Using technologies like this one can draw reluctant students in to group activities.

My most pertinent goal as we transition in to CCSS is implementing more of a “flipped” classroom model and having students do more “work” than the teacher. Technologies like ActiVote can help me achieve this goal in the future. ActiVote replaces or enhances a traditional teaching method, while preserving the integrity of the content. I look forward to using this technology in the future!