

Using Classroom Response Devices in Southeast Asia to Improve Extension Efficacy

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Classroom response devices called iClickers have been used in the classroom in the United States for a number of years and are increasingly being used in non-traditional training and learning situations, such as non-formal extension. With funds from the USAID funded MEAS project, ECHO Asia purchased 50 iClicker classroom response devices with an associated base station, instructor clicker, and software, and began using the devices at national and international meetings in 2012.

The ECHO Asia Impact Center is a branch office of ECHO, Inc., based in Ft. Myers, Florida. For over 30 years, ECHO has been assisting thousands of development workers and organizations around the world by providing free access to vital information and other resources needed to improve food production and food security among smallholder farmers. The ECHO Asia Impact Center was founded in Chiang Mai in 2009, and has an active network of 1500 development practitioners and organizations spanning Asia. ECHO Asia primarily impacts these network members by providing technical information; producing and distributing underutilized seeds of merit; and conducting regional conferences, trainings, and workshops.

iClickers have been used successfully by ECHO Asia in four agriculture and community development trainings and conferences in: Myanmar (sponsored by MEAS and focused on natural resource management using MEAS curriculum), the Philippines (at an ECHO Asia regional workshop), and Thailand (in MEAS related research, and at two ECHO Asia workshops and conferences). At each event, iClickers were used to engage participants in the presentations, establish baseline demographics and knowledge among the class, assess after-lesson knowledge through quizzes, gauge participant interest, and conduct evaluations of materials and methodologies presented.

In addition to monitoring effectiveness of ECHO Asia trainings, iClickers were used to solicit perceptions-type responses in a recent MEAS research project evaluating the current and future role of "Small Farm Resource Centers" (SFRCs) in SE Asia as agriculture and community development extension tools. The devices were used to gauge stakeholder and beneficiary perceptions about the efficacy of the centers related to improved livelihoods. One of the greatest assets of using iClickers in a learning situation is the capability of creating figures of responses in real-time, helping to engage the



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participants, and offering trainers continual feedback loops about the session content and progression.

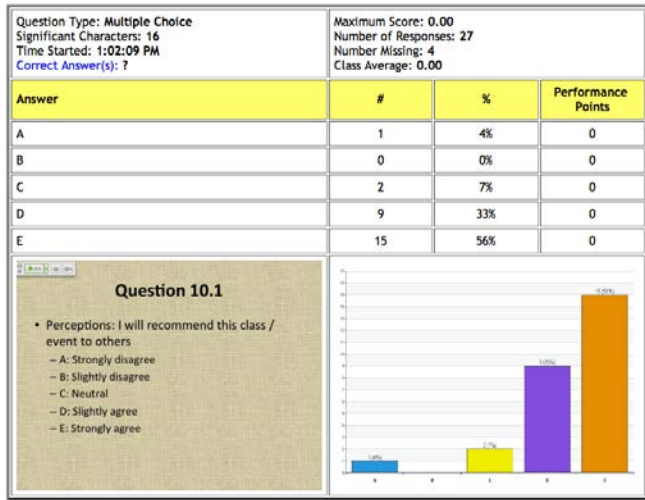


Figure 1: An example of using iClickers in trainings to gauge new information learned through quizzes

Additionally, the iClickers offer an anonymous method of response for learners in a large classroom setting without fear of retribution, losing face, or dishonoring superiors. It is our opinion that these devices are exceptionally well-suited for usage in Asia, where traditional methods of response and individual expression may be stifled by a communal spirit, hierarchical norms, and desire to save face.

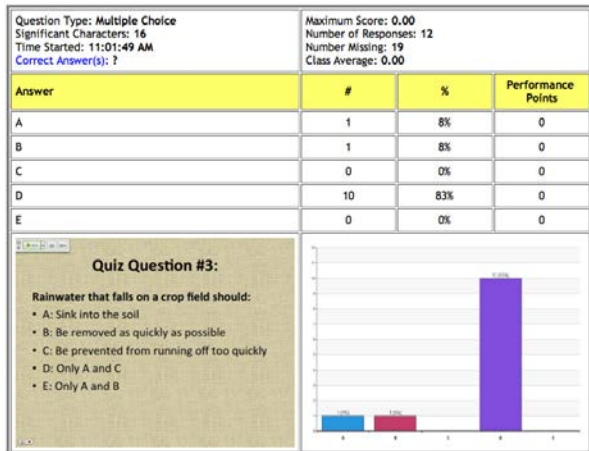


Figure 2: An example of using iClickers for Likert-type responses gauging perceptions

iClickers are particularly well-suited for Likert-type responses (Figure 2) and demographics responses with fewer than five possibilities. It is recommended that the newer models (which can handle numerical data entry) be used for open-ended and polling type responses. The only other limitation of the use of the devices is a power supply, although a battery and inverter may allow the devices to be used in rural off-grid areas.

Overall, iClickers have become an indispensable part of the ECHO Asia repertoire for engaging development workers, extension agents, and farmers in a fun, honest method for providing real-time feedback and evaluation data in formal and semi-formal group settings.



iClicker devices being used by trainees at a MEAS Natural Resource Management training



iClickers being used in a village meeting as part of the MEAS SFRC extension research gauging the efficacy of SFRCs in improving livelihood



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