**TLC Tip of the Week: Interactive Polling Tools**

As November nears and the airwaves fill with conversations and commercials related to the upcoming election, it's an opportune time to focus on another method of voting: interactive polling in the classroom. The teaching librarians have experimented with a variety of polling tools over the years, from low-tech raising of hands, to iClicker remote control-type devices, and now free online resources. Over the past year, I have utilized Poll Everywhere to increase participation and seek quick feedback from students during many of my classes.

Poll Everywhere allows users to create over 20 type of poll questions, including short answer, multiple choice, clickable image or maps, ranking/upvoting answers, and many more. Polls may be embedded directly within PowerPoint or Google Slides to easily integrate them within course content. Students respond anonymously using a web browser on their laptop, tablet, or smartphone; poll creators may also choose to enable responses to many types of questions via text messaging. In the poll settings, you may allow students to change their answers, or to answer multiple times (up to the maximum number of responses per poll; for the Higher-Ed Free version, this limit is 40 responses for each poll question).

In my experience, students have showed enthusiasm for using Poll Everywhere. Unlike occasional long silences waiting for a brave student to volunteer a verbal response, students respond quickly to poll questions and seem to enjoy seeing the responses of their peers (occasionally influencing them to change their own votes). Discrepancies in voting can also lead to good small group or class-wide discussions about the varying answers and (when relevant) why one answer is the best. Online polling seems to lower the barrier for class participation, especially for students who may be less comfortable speaking up in a group setting. Like any tool, it can be overused; I continue to experiment to determine when poll questions are effective vs other methods, seeking a balance between technological and face-to-face interactions. Additionally, as an anonymous service there is an opportunity for inappropriate use; fortunately, this behavior has been infrequent in my use of this resource.

Poll Everywhere is straightforward and beginner-friendly, though advanced customizations are also available to those who wish to dig a bit deeper into the options. I encourage you to give it a test drive, and please reach out to me (michel@up.edu or x7418) if you have questions or would like to learn more about my experience with this interactive polling tool.