

Scenario

Professor Richardson is teaching an introductory class in electrical engineering. In the standard format for the course the professor lectures to the 100+ students twice a week. Students then attend lab sessions where teaching assistants walk them through experiments and answer any questions they may have about the lecture. While professor Richardson welcomes questions from students during his lectures, he usually gets very few. However, students often do ask the teaching assistants for help with issues they did not understand. While the teaching assistants will let the professor know if any issues seem to have confused a lot of the students so he can go over it again the following week, he feels it would be more efficient if students could simply ask their questions the first time he lectured on the topic. He briefly considered incorporating audience response technology in the form of hardware-based devices resembling small remote controls.

However, he dismissed the idea when he found out that doing so would require him to use Power Point in his lectures to take advantage of their full functionality, as he rarely uses PowerPoint. Furthermore, each student would have to invest in a remote device, which he did not feel was fair, considering that he might not use it enough to justify the cost.

By implementing *geddit* in his course professor Richardson gives the student a free and easy opportunity to indicate their general level of understanding as well as submit questions during the lecture. By stopping a few times during the lecture and reviewing student level of understanding, and answering any submitted questions, he feels he is able to address students issues more directly and immediately. Towards midterm and final examinations Professor Richardson also prepares a few sample quiz questions to give the students an idea of what to expect. This also lets him sample their general level of understanding so that he can better review with them before the tests. That fact that *geddit* can be run from the web browser in his tablet computer also makes it very practical and non-intrusive and gives him the ability to use it

while employing several different teaching methods and during activities.

1. What is it?

A web-based tool that allows teachers to check on student understanding throughout a lesson and administer simple quiz questions.

2. How does it work?

Teachers create a 'course' online that gets its own unique ID number. They then prepare 'lessons' within the course which can contain topics and quiz questions. Students log in with their own accounts and join the class, via the course ID number, to participate in the lessons. By accessing the website on their mobile devices students indicate their level of understanding, can submit questions to the teacher, and answers quiz questions posted by teachers.

3. Who's doing it?

The *geddit* tool is currently marketed towards K-12 teachers and the available cases and samples are from this environment.

4. Why is it significant?

By leveraging a technology that most students already possess and are proficient at using, namely mobile devices, teachers have a tool to increase their interaction and engagement with students. This is particularly relevant in large lecture-style courses in which student / instructor interaction is traditionally limited. Its ease of use and the fact that it is free makes it more desirable for teachers and students to use. With further development it has the potential to replace more expensive, commercial student response systems such as 'clickers' from Turning Technologies.

5. What are the downsides?

The tool is free, so some may be concerned with its longevity or staying power. The tool is also fairly basic with few quiz options and it does not integrate with LMS tools such as BlackBoard for saving quiz responses. In addition, some faculty have expressed concern about allowing student-owned technology devices to be used in class because they fear it will cause distractions if stu-

dents use them for non-academic purposes. It is also necessary to decide how to deal with situations where students don't possess a compatible device that allows them to participate when faculty wants to use *Top Hat* in a course.

Being an online tool it should work with different screen reader technologies, but they cannot guarantee that this will always be the case. Instructors should always keep accessibility issues in mind when using new online tools in their classroom. In case of any doubts or concerns, please contact the relevant offices on campus for advice and assistance.

6. Where is it going?

The team behind the tool seems committed to its development. If it can continue its development it could be a very useful tool for student interaction at the college level. With further development it has the potential to replace more expensive, commercial student response systems such as 'clickers' from Turning Technologies. For example, *geddit* does not require students to invest in a hardware clicker device and the instructor does not need to bring a receiver dongle to class. Likewise, *geddit* has full functionality online and does not require integration with PowerPoint or other software on the instructor's computer. Finally, *geddit* has a very user friendly interface and is simple to setup, so most instructors will need very little, if any, training to use it.

7. What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Mobile learning is on the rise and likely to increase significantly in the coming years. Tools that can help teachers and students connect while using existing mobile technology, especially during larger lectures, may have great potential. Considering that most college students are already very invested in their mobile devices it makes sense to try to integrate them into the instruction. Furthermore, by allowing teachers to better connect with their students and understand their absorption of course materials they will better be able to tailor their teaching to the level and needs of their students.

8. Where can I find out more?

Visit the *geddit* website at <http://www.letsGEDdit.com/>.

You may also contact Jacob E. Larsen (jlarsen@iastate.edu) in IT Services to discuss how *geddit* can be used with your students.

Additional [legal information](#).