ABA in the Classroom

Increasing Active Student Responses (ASR)

Increasing the number of active student responses (ASR) during group instruction has been linked to improved learning outcomes for students. Choral responding and response cards are just two of several methods that can be used to support an increase in ASR.
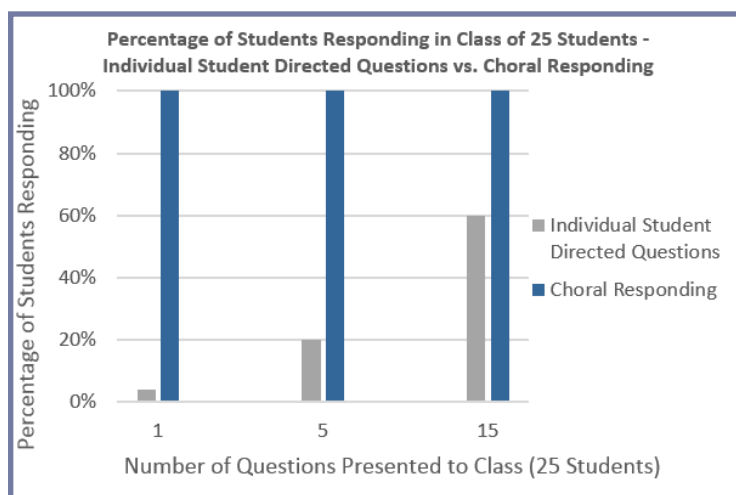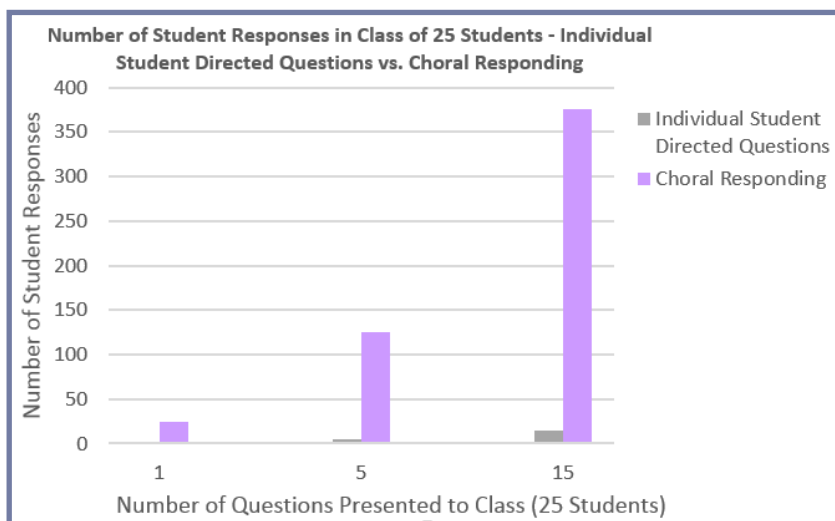
Choral Responding

Choral responding is the easiest to implement and allows all students to respond aloud in unison to a teacher directed question. There are no materials required, and having students respond in unison can elicit an increase in active engagement of all, including students with autism, learning disabilities, and/or whom require special education supports.

Choral responding can be implemented to compliment common teaching strategies such as cooperative learning and individual student directed response methods. During cooperative learning opportunities, it may be difficult to keep students on task as high achieving students may participate, while others sit passively. With individual student directed response methods of presenting a question to the entire class and then calling upon one student, more frequent responses are provided by high achieving students and few or no responses provided by others. Choral responding not only supports an increase in the total number of student responses and the percentage of students who respond (see charts), but also provides students the opportunity to respond when they wouldn't otherwise. Therefore, choral responding can aid in building greater self confidence and increasing the likelihood for future responses when called on by the teacher.

Response Cards

Similar to choral responding, response cards are also used to increase active participation of students by having the students display or write an answer in unison to a question or problem presented by the teacher. Response cards can be formatted two ways: pre-printed material with choices such as A, B, C, D, or Yes/No; cards or small white board where students write their response may also be used.

"Research on choral responding has demonstrated a strong relationship between frequent student responses during instruction and improved learning outcomes (Wood & Heward, 2008).

Advantages to Choral Responding and Response Cards

- Allows the teacher to present many opportunities for all students to actively participate

- Provides immediate feedback regarding student comprehension, or if additional review is needed

- An effective strategy for including students with special learning needs in the general education classroom

- Builds confidence by allowing students to perform well in front of their peers

- When students are engaged, off task and disruptive behaviour are reduced

Tips to Implement Choral Responding and Response Cards in the Classroom

1. Teach the class the expectations for using choral responding and response cards.
   - Demonstrate several examples of correct and incorrect responding
   - Create clear signals that the students can follow, such as holding a hand up with palm out to gesture students to wait and think about their answer, while using a "swooping " motion of the hand, clap, or point to indicate everyone is to respond in unison

2. Choose curricular content that is appropriate for short questions and answers (best when only one answer is correct).

3. Give feedback on the group responses. Deliver praise and approval for student participation and correct responding. If all students respond correctly, provide praise and move on. Should students respond incorrectly, provide the correct response and return to the question later. Be sure to acknowledge and validate answers that differ from the instructor's, but could still be considered correct.

4. Maintain an energetic pace. Faster pacing produces higher levels of participation, correct responding, and on-task behavior.

5. Intersperse choral responding and response cards with calling on individual students, and implementing other methods of teaching. By interspersing, you can shape consistent responding in students who do not respond consistently during whole group, assess comprehension of individual students, and provide students with more opportunities to respond to lesson content and receive feedback. Remember to call on the student after presenting the question, cueing the students to maintain attention.

Additional information on classroom implementation of choral responding can be found at the following links:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Em-VRAqZTck
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKkR0EpvrcM

Tech Talk

Plickers is a free student response system. The Plicker app can be downloaded onto any iOS or Android device; only one device is required. Once you have set up a free account and created your class at www.plickers.com, Plickers will assign each student a printable paper response card.   After downloading the app, students answer multiple choice questions by raising their response card. Teachers are able to see student responses in real time which allows for immediate feedback.

If you would like additional support with introducing Plicker into your classroom, please contact Tanya Kroocmo, STEM Coordinator at (807) 274-9855 ext. 5007 or Brad Gushulak, STEM Coordinator at (807) 274-9855 ext. 5012.

References:

Blackwell, A. J. & McLuaghlin, T.F. (2005). Using guided notes, choral responding, and response cards to increase student performance. *The International Journal of Special Education, 20(2).*

Hundert, J. (2009). Inclusion of students with autism. Using ABA based supports in general education. Austin, TX: PRO-ED Inc.

Wood, C.L. & Heward, W. L. (2008). *Good noise! Using choral responding to increase the effectiveness of group instruction.* Unpublished manuscript.