



Paul Middleditch

Project: Interaction in Lectures with Mobile Devices

School: School of Social Sciences

Course: ECON10042 No. of students: 500 approx Level: UG

Themes: Student Engagement, Feedback, Large Cohort

TESS 2011

Teaching Enhancement and Student Success

TESS is a University-wide initiative, funded by the Faculty of Humanities. Working with the Faculty eLearning Teams, academics set up projects aimed at developing course content specific to their needs, through eLearning tools and skills development.

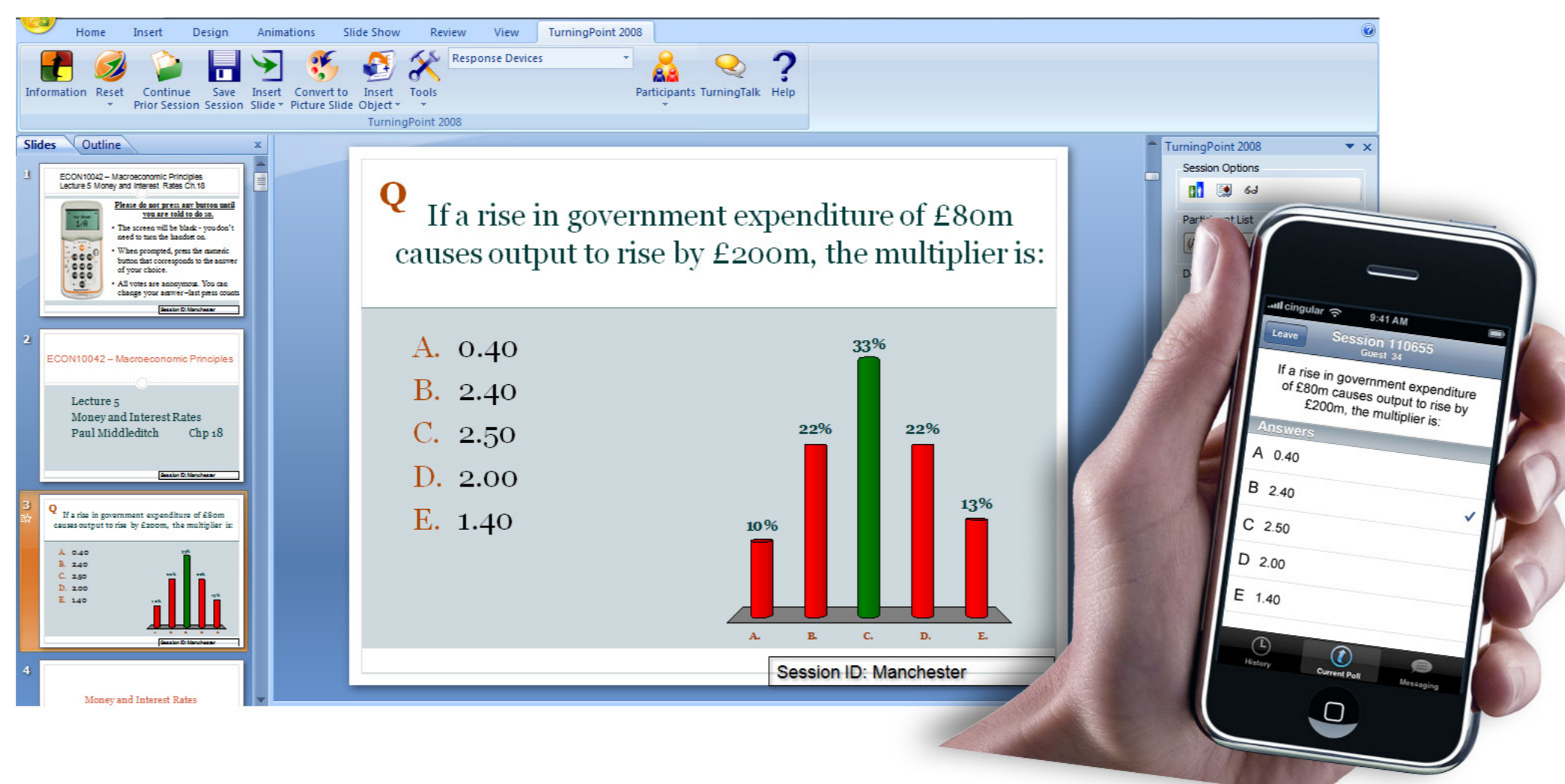
What was the problem?

It has become clear to me that introducing Turning Point 'in lecture' interaction software during various revision sessions is very popular with students. I have now used this software since 2009 for large cohorts (350 - 650), but only occasionally. The reason for this is that the distribution of handsets is problematic (for one session in 2009 with 500 students we needed to use 4 Teaching Assistants, AV Engineers and a great deal of assistance from the Humanities eLearning Team led on the day by Will Moindrot).

How was the problem solved?

The idea to use mobile devices to solve this problem came from the 'text' polling used by TV and radio stations. There was a possibility that this could be solved by utilizing the SMS, Bluetooth or Internet technology that most hand held mobiles already possess. The question was, did this software exist, and if so how could it be adapted/adopted to fulfil this new academic purpose? One answer came after suggestions for possible solutions from Will Moindrot from the eLearning Team. On top of the text software, Will suggested using Google Moderator and Turning Point, both

applications using the Web rather than SMS. With very little time we set up a pilot for the Turning Point web based application on an economics module (ECON10042 - Macroeconomic Principles) for a cohort of 533 students.



How successful was the solution?

We have disseminated this pilot through the Economics Discipline Area as part of the DA Teaching and Learning Showcase on 18th May 2011 and at the Faculty Teaching and Learning Showcase on 5th July 2011. The TESS project allowed the purchase of 80 web licenses for 2011/2012 which can be used by colleagues in the Faculty by contacting Will Moindrot (elarning@manchester.ac.uk). In the future we are hoping that we can get enough licenses (around 350) to provide for the large cohorts that this project was designed to help. Fingers crossed!

What did the students think?

It is worth stressing here that the success of Turning Point as a means of improving student satisfaction is becoming well known. This pilot was really about testing the feasibility of an alternative that addressed the physical need for student handsets. The feedback from the students was highly positive, which was expected, only it has now become apparent that we can deliver this satisfaction enhancer for large cohorts for every week of the semester; something that the physical handsets inhibited.

The Humanities eLearning Team are on-hand to provide advice, guidance and demonstrations to academic staff on the opportunities for using technology in teaching, learning and assessment.

