



Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

One of the issues we continually consider about assessment is how to make it meaningful and use it in such a manner that it promotes deep learning. In addition to using assessments as a means of determining grades, we want assessments that help develop students as independent thinkers. Our hope is that students will be motivated to consider where they are in the learning process and what their next steps need to be in order to feel that concepts have been sufficiently mastered. Classroom Assessment Techniques are quick activities that provide both the student and the instructor immediate feedback regarding levels of understanding.

- **Knowledge probe.** At the beginning of class, ask students to answer previously prepared open-ended or multiple choice questions to assess their existing knowledge. You could use some sort of response system (such as Clickers) to gauge students' understanding, or you could pair this CAT with a **"Turn and Talk"** in order to start peer conversation. As the instructor, your role is to note any weaknesses in knowledge or overarching misconceptions and elaborate on these ideas during the upcoming lecture.
- **Minute paper.** At the end of class ask students to respond to prompts such as, "What is the most important point you learned today?" and "What is feeling least clear for you?" Collect and review responses and comment on the findings at the start of the next class session. It is nice to begin a conversation with, "It seems we are all feeling pretty good about <insert topic here>, but many of us are still feeling fuzzy about <insert topic here>. Let's talk for a bit about this fuzziness. Perhaps we can clarify."
- **One-sentence summary.** This CAT may be used at any point during a class session, but is often good to use when a difficult concept has been presented and you fear that many students may have shallow understandings. Ask students to write a one-sentence summary of the concept. These summaries may be shared with a partner or in small groups, and then discussed whole class.
- **Application cards.** Students write down a real-world application for a theory, principle or procedure you have just covered. Collect and pick out a broad range of examples to present to the class. Once again, you can ask students to discuss and assess these ideas in dyads or triads.
- **Muddiest point.** Students jot down the "muddiest point" of the lecture, i.e. the concept they feel they haven't completely wrapped their brains around just yet. Collect written answers and tailor the next segment of the lecture to include clarification, or have students discuss with peers. Muddiest point makes a nice exit card, too, if students are asked to write this idea and then hand it to you on their way out of class. It provides a nice starting point for the next lecture.
- **3-2-1.** This prompt allows for myriad choices regarding the information you would like students to consider. It can be very open-ended such as: Write 3 big ideas related to the topic, 2 ways this topic relates to your life, and 1 question you still have. It can also be very content driven: Write 3 cultural aspects evidenced in Holocaust data, 2 symbolic representations seen within the data, and 1 idea related to the notion of power that is supported by the data.

For more information, see:

Walker, D. (2012). Classroom assessment techniques: An assessment and student evaluation method. *Creative Education*, 3, 903-907.