CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES (CATs)

Application Cards - students are asked to write down at least one possible, real-world application for what they have just learned. This helps them connect learned concepts with prior knowledge and can be used in any course and class.

Approximate Analogies - students complete the second half of an analogy - A is to B as X is to Y - for which the instructor has supplied the first half (A is to B). This can be used in any discipline and class.

Background Knowledge Probe - a simple questionnaire to measure students’ knowledge of certain topics or concepts. It provides feedback on the range of students' preparation and is most useful at the start of a new course, lesson, or topic.

Categorizing Grid - students are presented with a grid containing two or three important categories along with a scrambled list of subordinate items and are given a limited time to sort the subordinate items into the correct categories on the grid. This is most useful in introductory-level courses.

Classroom Opinion Polls - students indicate degree of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement. This technique can be used to prepare students to discuss a controversial issue and can be adapted to any class size.

Concept Maps - students draw a diagram of nodes arranged in hierarchical order, each containing concept labels, which are linked together with directional lines. This assesses how well students see the big picture as well as their metacognitive skills.

Defining Features Matrix - students are asked to categorize closely related concepts according to the presence or absence of important characteristics. Since this technique is used in a matrix format, students’ responses are easy to score and analyze.

Directed Paraphrasing - students paraphrase part of a lesson for a specific audience and purpose in their own words. This is especially useful for assessing students' ability to translate highly specialized information into language that non-experts can understand.

Draw for understanding - students are asked to make drawings that represent their understanding of the concept that has been covered, and explain what the drawing means.

Empty Outlines - students are provided with an empty or partially completed outline of a presentation or assignment and asked to fill in the blanks. It works best in courses with a large amount of structured content.

Focused Listing - directs students to list several ideas that are related to a central point. It is used to determine how well students remember important ideas related to a particular concept or topic.
Memory Matrix - a table with given row and column headings and empty cells to illustrate how well students can organize information and illustrate relationships. It can be used in introductory courses with substantial and clearly categorizable information or as a pre-instructional assessment of student knowledge.

Minute Paper - students are asked to respond briefly to two questions: "What was the most important thing you learned during this class?" and "What important question remains unanswered?" The next time the class meets the instructor addresses the questions raised by the students to facilitate discussion.

Muddiest Point - students write down a quick response to one question: "What was the muddiest point in...?" This technique helps faculty discover which points are most difficult for students to learn and decide how much time to spend on each topic during class.

One-Sentence Summary - students answer the questions "Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why?" in one sentence.

Pro and Con Grid - students list pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages of an issue presented by the instructor. This technique works particularly well in humanities and social sciences courses.

Think-Pair-Share - the teacher asks a question or presents a problem and lets every student think individually for 30-45 seconds, then each pair of students exchange ideas, after which they share their ideas with another pair of students or with the whole class.

Student-Generated Test Questions - students prepare test questions and model answers. This technique is best administered several weeks before a major test to allow time for

Word Journal - students summarize a short text in a single word and then write one or two paragraphs explaining why they chose this particular word. This is best used to assess understanding of short texts or articles.

SOURCES