Classroom Assessment Techniques

Engagement through Active Learning

Techniques that combine principles of active learning with no-stake and low-stake formative learning assessments.

Assessments for learning, not assessments of learning

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At the end of class, have students write down:

- **Three** ideas/concepts that were reinforced
- **Two** new ideas or concepts they learned
- **One** question they still have

Review before the next class meeting and use these responses to clarify, correct, or elaborate.

TRY THIS:

Trivia Night

Mimic a trivia pub night using class concepts, fostering teamwork, and building community in a fun environment.

Muddiest Point

Have students describe **the most unclear or confusing part** of a lecture, discussion, homework assignment, or field experience in a course that emphasizes integrating, synthesizing, and evaluating information. This technique will help faculty determine which particular aspects of the course content are most difficult for students to learn.

A TOOL TO CONSIDER:

- **SurveyPlanet**

SurveyPlanet is a free platform to construct course evaluations, surveys, and real-time polling to gain immediate formative feedback in class.

Empty Outline

To assess how well students have learned course content, give students a partially completed outline on a topic and have them **fill in the blank spaces**. This will help faculty determine how well students have learned the important aspects of a topic and will help students become more aware of the organization of the main points of the material.

INNOVATIVE RESOURCE:

- **Teaching Tools Lesson Planner**

The **Lesson Planning Tool** makes it quick and easy for instructors to plan effective class sessions while receiving custom feedback about how to make their lesson more structured, engaging, complex, and inclusive.

Student-Generated Test Questions

Provide a list of key concepts, ideas, or applications of course material.
At first, it can be difficult for students to generate their own questions, but to encourage better questions, **ask students to think about and focus on some of the more difficult concepts**, and then have them propose questions that start with "explain" or that use "how" and "why" framing. Students can road-test their questions by answering them themselves: Do the questions lead to longer, more substantive answers, or can they be answered with a simple "yes" or "no"?

One-Minute Paper

One-minute papers are usually done at the end of the day. Students can work individually or in groups here. They must **answer a brief question in writing**. Typical questions posed by teachers center around:

- Main point
- Most surprising concept
- Questions not answered
- Most confusing area of topic
- What question from the topic might appear on the next test

Concept Mapping

Concept maps are drawings or diagrams used to help students organize and represent knowledge of a subject. Concept maps begin with a main idea (or concept) and then branch out to show how that main idea can be broken down into specific topics. **This activity provides an observable action of the student's patterns of understanding related to a central idea or concept**.
Concept mapping serves several purposes:

- Helps students brainstorm and generate new ideas
- Encourages students to discover new concepts and the propositions that connect them
- Allows students to more clearly communicate ideas, thoughts and information
- Helps students integrate new concepts with older concepts
- Enables students to gain enhanced knowledge of any topic and evaluate the information

Concept maps **require a lot of cognitive work on the part of the student**, and a lot of preparation and analysis on the part of the instructor. This activity is useful in any course with high theoretical content, courses with large amounts of facts and principles.

Strategic Questioning

Questioning strategies may be used with individuals, small groups, or the entire class. Effective **formative assessment strategies involve asking students to answer higher-order questions** such as "why" and "how." Higher-order questions require more in-depth thinking from the students. They can help the instructor discern the level and extent of the students' understanding.

Higher-order questions promote critical thinking skills because these types of questions expect students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information instead of simply recalling facts. *Application questions* require students to transfer knowledge learned in one context to another; *analysis questions* expect students to break the whole into component parts such as analyze mood, setting, characters, express opinions, make inferences, and draw conclusions; *synthesis questions* have students use old ideas to create new ones using information from a variety of sources; and *evaluation questions* require students to make judgments, explain reasons for judgments, compare and contrast information, and develop reasoning using evidence from the text.

Question Ideas

- How do you know this?
- How would your perspective be different if you were on the opposite side?
- How would you solve this problem?
- Why?
- How does this matter?
- What outcome do you predict, and why?
- What is a more elaborate example of this concept?
- What ethical considerations are involved in this situation or decision?
- What evidence supports your point of view or conclusion?
- What criteria would you use to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach?

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