Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT)


According to the teaching and learning literature, learning in a classroom is more effective and efficient when students have explicit, reasonable positive goals, and when their goals fit well with the teacher’s goals. Using classroom assessment techniques can help college instructors obtain useful feedback from students on what, how much, and how well they are learning. The central aim is to use the student’s (anonymous) feedback to refocus on the teaching and being willing to fill in the gaps between what is being taught and what is actually being learned. There are 50 simple classroom assessment techniques, one of them is described below.

The Minute Paper

Description. No other technique has been used more often or by more college teachers than the Minute Paper. This technique—also known as the One-Minute Paper and the Half-Sheet Response—provides a quick and extremely simple way to collect written feedback on student learning. To use the Minute Paper, an instructor stops class two or three minutes early and asks student to respond briefly to some variation on the following two questions: “What was the most important thing you learned during this class?” and “What important question remains unanswered?” Students write their responses on index cards or half-sheets of scrap paper and hand them in.

Step-by-Step Procedure.

1. Decide first what you want to focus on, and when to administer the Minute Paper. If you want to focus on students’ understanding of a lecture, the last few minutes of class may be the best time. If your focus is a prior homework assignment, however, the first few minutes may be more appropriate.
2. Using the two basic questions from the “Description” above as starting points, write Minute Paper prompts that fit your course and students. You may want to try out your Minute Paper on a colleague or teaching assistant before using it in class.
3. Plan to set aside five to ten minutes of your next class to use the technique, as well as time later to discuss the results.
4. Before class, write one or two Minute Paper questions on the chalkboard (or on an overhead transparency).
5. At a convenient time, hand out index cards or half-sheets of scrap paper.
6. Unless there is a very good reason to know who wrote what, direct students to leave their names off the papers or cards.
7. Let the students know how much time they will have (2-5 minutes per question is usually enough), what kinds of answers you want (words, phrases, or short sentences), and when they can expect your feedback.

Websites.
http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/assess-1.htm
http://www.iub.edu/~teaching/ourservices/assess/samplecats/shtml
http://fod.msu.edu/oir/Assessment/cats.asp