Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

Assessment Strategies for Student Learning.

Formative assessment **-** In-class; takes the pulse of the class; not high stakes; helps students learn or helps students reinforce what they have learned

Summative assessment - takes place at the end of the course; usually graded and therefore high stakes.

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs for short)

- in-class exercises that helps instructors teach or reinforce a concept in class
- collects feedback during class
- provides gauge for instructors on what students have learned in class (met learning outcomes). Indirectly, it helps us reflect on our teaching strategies and strengthen our teaching skills.
- for single-session classes, CATs can serve both as formative and/or summative assessments (for that session).
- CATs are useful active learning exercises appropriate for single- or multi-sessions classes.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

Contains detailed instructions for a variety of CATs for use in the class. Each link contains the activity and a lesson plan to guide the usage of the CAT in your classroom.

A. Background Knowledge Probe

Target Topic(s)

orient to basic web search
orient on boolean operators
Class Level

1000,2000
Class Type

single-session
Prep Time

print worksheet
Class Time

10 mins

B. 1000 Level Misconception

Target Topic(s)

introduction to library catalog; conceptual
Class Level

1000
Class Type

single-session
Prep Time
Class Time

C. Categorizing Grid

Target Topic(s)

develop understanding of the organization of knowledge
help develop skills in selecting tools for research
Class Level

1000, 2000, 3000
Class Type

single-session
Prep Time

some, print exercise
Class Time

10-15 mins

D. Checking for Understanding

Target Topic(s)

applicable to any topic instructor wants
Class Level

all, incl. Grads
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
semester
Prep Time

some
Class Time

6 mins plus discussion

E. General Questions

Target Topic(s)

class evaluation - most useful if doing 2 or more
sessions
Class Level

all, incl. Grads
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
Prep Time

print questions
Class Time

3 mins

F. Grouping Sources of Information

Target Topic(s)

understanding what different sources offer (e.g.,
Encyclopedias vs articles)
Class Level

1000,2000
Class Type

single-session
Prep Time

print worksheet
Class Time

full class outline

G. How to find a scholarly article

Target Topic(s)

searching databases and catalog
using citation management tool
Class Level

all, incl. Grads
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
Prep Time

print worksheet
Class Time

full class outline

H. Minute Paper

Target Topic(s)

concept evaluation tool - all topics
baseline info to start class - all topics
Class Level

all UG levels
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
semester
Prep Time

decide which option
Class Time

2 mins; 12-18 mins
depends on which outline chosen

I. Evaluating Sources Checklist & Summary

Target Topic(s)

evaluating sources - checklist
summarizing information concisely
Class Level

1000,2000
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
Prep Time

5 mins
Class Time

class demo and exercise

J. Paraphrasing Boolean operators

Target Topic(s)

overview on boolean operators
overview on truncation
Class Level

3000,4000
Class Type

single-session
Prep Time

5 mins
Class Time

3 mins

K. Pre-Post Class Quiz

Target Topic(s)

applicable to various topics covered in class (e.g., peer
review; reading citations, etc.,)
Class Level

all levels, incl. Grads
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
Prep Time

print questions
Class Time

4 mins, 2 at start and 2 at end

L. Scholarly Popular Categorization

Target Topic(s)

understanding differences in scholarly and popular
materials
Class Level

1000,2000
Class Type

single-session
multi-session
Prep Time

create questions, send to students in advance
Class Time

full class outline

M. Working with a Topic

Target Topic(s)

construct searchable question
identify subject headings
narrow down research
Class Level

all UG levels
Class Type

multi-session
Prep Time

demo topics
Class Time

in class exercise, demo