



Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

Classroom Assessment Techniques are simple, non-graded, in-class activities that help faculty engage students and ultimately improve student learning.

Examples of CATs

- **Minute Paper** -- This technique, also known as the One-Minute Paper usually takes place near the end of class. The instructor asks the students to record on a note-card (or a half-sheet of paper) "the most important thing you learned during this class" and/or "what important question remains unanswered".
- **Muddiest Point** -- The basic strategy is to ask students to quickly jot down on a piece of paper the single "muddiest point" from the day's lecture. The students submit the notes to the instructor, usually anonymously, at the end of the lecture. The instructor reports back to the students at the beginning of the next lecture by a) responding to the most mentioned one or two points, and b) briefly addressing as many others as possible and reminding students of additional sources of information.
- **Empty Outlines** -- The instructor asks the students to outline some portion of the lecture in a limited amount of time. The student can be asked to start from scratch or the instructor may provide a partial outline of the lecture.
- **Defining Features Matrix** -- The students are given a matrix that includes three columns and several rows. The first column lists important features/characteristics of seemingly similar items or concepts. The second and third columns require students to categorize the items or concepts according to the presence (+) or absence (-) of the features/characteristics.
- **Word Journal** -- The students are asked to summarize a section of text using one word. Next, the students must write a paragraph or two explaining why they chose that word.
- **One Sentence Summary** -- The instructor challenges students to answer "Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why" about a given topic, and then to synthesize the answer into a single informative, grammatical summary sentence.
- **Approximate Analogies** -- The students are asked to simply complete the second half of an analogy – A is to B as X is to Y – for which the instructor supplies the first half (A is to B). The students may respond to this CAT in as few as two words.
- **Invented Dialogues** -- The students synthesize their knowledge of issues, personalities, and historical periods into the form of a carefully structured, illustrative conversation.

- **What's the Principle?** -- The students are provided with a few problems and are asked to state the principle that best applies to each problem. This CAT helps students recognize the general types of problems they can solve with particular principles, rather than merely learning how to solve individual problems.
- **Problem Recognition Tasks** -- The instructor provides the student with a few examples of common problem types. The students' task is to recognize and identify the particular type of problem each example represents.
- **Direct Paraphrasing** --The student is directed to paraphrase part of a lesson for a specific audience and purpose, using their own words.
- **Applications Cards** -- The students will hear or read about an important principle, generalization, theory, or procedure. The instructor hands out an index card and asks the students to write down at least one possible, real-word application for that what they have just learned.
- **Course-Related Self-Confidence Surveys** -- The students are given a survey that assesses a few simple questions aimed at getting a rough measure of the students' self confidence in relation to a specific skill or ability.
- **Self-Assessment of Ways of Learning** -- The students are asked to describe their general approach to learning, or their learning style, by comparing themselves with several different profiles and choosing those that, in their opinion, most closely resemble them.
- **Teacher-Designed Feedback Forms** -- The students are provided feedback forms weekly or after a topic has been covered that elicit limited, focused responses to very specific questions posed by the instructor. The results are quickly analyzed and allow instructors to make informed and timely adjustments in their teaching.
- **RSQC2 (Recall, Summarize, Question, Connect, and Comment)** -- This CAT guides students' quickly through simple recall, summary, analysis, evaluation, and syntheses exercises focusing on a previous class session. Instructors may go through all five steps or select individual components.
- **Group Instructional Feedback Technique (GIFT)** -- The students respond to the following three questions: 1) What works? 2) What doesn't? 3) What can be done to improve it? Ideally, you would like for someone other than the instructor to poll the students, determine which are the most frequent responses, summarize the responses and then report back to the instructor.

Source: Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.