

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

- Classroom assessments measure student learning as it happens, in the moment, on a day to day basis.
- Adjustments made as a result of the CAT should effect the same group of students that were administered the CAT. Clearly, any insight gained should be carried over to the next time that the course is taught, but the overall focus is on the current set of students being taught.
- That is, CATs measure student learning on a smaller scale. It is not from one course offering to the next, but rather from one class period to the next.

Commonly used CATs (Several taken directly from the Angelo and Cross text):

Name	How It's Done	How to Use
Application Article	During last 15 minutes of class, ask students to write a short news article about how a major point applies to a real-world situation. An alternative is to have students write a short article about how the point applies to their major.	Sort articles and pick several to read at next class, illustrating range of applications, depth of understanding, and creativity.
Audible/Nods	Pose a question to the class and make note of any verbal/non-verbal clues regarding their comprehension of the material.	Based on their reaction to the question, adjust your teaching, and then track their understanding with further questioning.
Background Knowledge Probe (Pre-Test)	Administer questionnaires prior to introducing a new topic to gauge students' prior understanding of the material. <u>Background Knowledge Probes can also be used as pre- and post-assessments</u> ; before instruction and immediately after , to get a rough sense of how much and how well they have learned the material.	With so much to cover, results can help to divvy up time appropriately with quick reviews on some topics and more intense coverage on others.
Chain Notes	Pass around a large envelope with a question about the class content. Each student writes a short answer, puts it in the envelope, and passes it on.	Sort answers by type of answer. At next class meeting, use to discuss ways of understanding.
Exam Evaluations	Select a test that you use regularly and add a few questions at the end which ask students to evaluate how well the test measures their knowledge or skills.	Make changes to the test that is reasonable. Track student responses over time.
Journals	Ask students to keep journals that detail their thoughts about the class. May ask them to be specific, recording only attitudes, values, or self-awareness.	Have students turn in the journals several times during the semester so you can chart changes and development.

Muddiest Point	During last few minutes of class period, ask students to use a half-sheet of paper (a discussion thread can also be used) and describe what they didn't understand and what they think might help.	Review before next class meeting and use to clarify, correct, or elaborate.
Peer Review	Work with a willing colleague, pick a representative class session to be observed, and ask the colleague to take notes about his/her impression of the class, your interactions with students, and your teaching methods.	Decide method with the colleague. Discussion is best, but a written report may be more useful in the long term.
Student Rep Group	Ask students to volunteer to meet as a small group with you on a regular basis to discuss how the course is progressing, what they are learning, and suggestions for improving the course.	Some issues will be for your information, some to be addressed in class.
Student-generated test questions	Divide the class into groups and assign each group a topic on which they are each to write a question and answer for the next test. Each student should be assured of getting at least one question right on the test.	Use as many of the questions as possible, combining those that are similar.
Documented Problem Solving/Walk-About	Have students solve problems where on one side of the page they work out the problem and on the other they describe the steps used. This way you assess not only if they can work out the problems, but also if they understand the "why" behind it. The Documented Problem Solving CAT is turned in and evaluated for the next class period, whereas the Walk-About has the instructor walking around the room making note of the issues so that an adjustment can be made immediately.	By identifying missed or misunderstood steps in the process you can isolate the specific issue the class is having with the specific problem type. In this they can be better prepared to work all problems of this type, not just this one problem.
Suggestion Box	Put a box near the classroom door and ask students to leave notes about any class issue.	Review and respond at the next class session.
Y-Chart	Have students draw a large Y on their paper. At the top place a paragraph, works-cited, HTML code, etc. with errors in it. On one side of the Y have students identify the errors and on the other have them state "why" they are errors.	By identifying missed or misunderstood errors, you can isolate the specific issue the class is having with the specific problem type. In this they can be better prepared to work all problems of this type, not just this one problem.

Between the Nods /Audible CAT, you should be doing several CATs a day, much less over the duration of the course. The difference being that these CATs do not produce as much usable information as the others, so choose accordingly.