

## **Samples of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)** *(adapted from Angelo & Cross, Classroom Assessment Techniques)*

### **Word Journal**

This method asks students to summarize a concept, reading, or idea by choosing one word. Students either share their word in class, in small groups, or also write a paragraph explaining the reason why they chose that word. This method can also be used to get a sense of student's attitudes or prior knowledge when introducing a topic, for example, "share one word that describes how you feel about the issue of X."

### **Categorization/Pro Con Matrix**

The Categorization Grid and Pro/Con Matrix are methods that ask students to pause in their learning and take time to make connections between concepts. This method also allows instructors to see how students understand the big picture and connect various concepts and to uncover any common gaps in their thinking.

These methods simply ask students to assign various ideas/terms/concepts to certain categories. For example, "there are the 3 main theories discussed so far, assign the following terms to the most appropriate theory." The Pro/Con Matrix is similar in format yet takes a problem-based approach. For example, "make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of this piece of legislation."

### **Concept Maps**

Concepts maps are drawings or diagrams showing how people connect various ideas and concepts. Similar to grids and matrices, concept maps allow instructors to see how students understand relationships and any gaps in their thinking. However, unlike grids or matrices, concepts maps typically do not have a correct answer. Students each represent their connections in different ways. Some instructors use concepts maps throughout a course to see how students thinking has changed and evolved as their knowledge on a subject becomes more sophisticated.

## **Study Time Logs**

Study Time Logs ask students to record their study time spent preparing for an exam or assignment, or when studying for a course. The instructor asks students to record their time studying over a predetermined period, as well as how they spent their time (reading the text, reviewing notes, solving problems, discussing in a study group etc.).

It can be useful to combine this approach with an “exam wrapper” or post-assignment self-assessment where students compare their study habits with their performance. Students can be asked, individually or in small groups, to reflect on ways in which their study methods could be adapted or improved for future assignments or exams.

## **Minute Paper/Muddiest Point**

These are perhaps the easiest CATs to create and administer and can be used spontaneously. The Minute Paper asks students to respond to 1-3 questions in just a few minutes, often on a half-sheet of paper to keep it short. Through simple questions, students are asked to reflect on a lesson and self-assess their knowledge. Typical questions include:

- What was the most important thing you learned about X?
- What important question about X remains unanswered?

A question about the course or the instructor can be included:

- What is one specific change you would recommend for this class that would help your learning?

The Muddiest Point is a variation of the method and asks students specifically to identify an area of confusion about a topic or concept.

- What was the muddiest point about X?