

Learning, Teaching & Innovative Technologies Center



Middle Tennessee State University

Assessment Activities

There are numerous activities that can be used to assess learning in the classroom. Assessment activities help students think deeper about the information discussed in class because it promotes reflection and key idea repetition. Chain notes, an empty box, the one-minute paper, student-generated test questions, annotated portfolios, and concept maps are some assessment activities mentioned in the book *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, written by Thomas A. Angelo and Patricia Cross, that help promote active learning and help the instructor key in on weak areas and student understanding.

Chain notes is a simple process where a sheet of paper is passed around or online discussion postings are used for students to answer the question: What is one thing you learned during today's session that is important to you? Each student is to write something different until everyone in the class has participated. Copies can be made and distributed as notes and it can also be used to discuss points mentioned in the activity that may be unclear.

An empty box (virtual or physical) can be used for several assessment activities such as having the students write a "burning question" on a small piece of paper and deposit it in a box. During the next class session, these questions can be used for group activities where 2-3 students get together and brainstorm answers, then the answers can be discussed with the whole class. The empty box can be used at the conclusion of a class by having the students write a question about something they learned in class and depositing it into the box. Next, pass the box around and have each student take out a card and read the question and have the class discuss the answer. These questions can be used as a review before a test or by posting them on a discussion board.

The one-minute paper can be used at the end of or after a class or before introducing a new topic by asking the students to write the answers to the questions: What was the most useful thing you learned during this session? and What problems or questions do you have? These points can be discussed at the beginning of the next class as a review before proceeding to the next topic. This activity helps students consolidate and reflect on key information and provide immediate feedback to the instructor. The one-minute paper takes a small amount of time to expedite and it can be administered to large groups.

Another activity that can be used to assess student learning is the student-generated test questions. At the conclusion of a class, ask the students to take five minutes to write two to three test questions over the material discussed in the session and have them email or post the questions to everyone in the class. Students can use the questions as a review. The questions can also be discussed in class. Student-generated test questions allow faculty to see what the students view as important, what aspects of the lesson they understand, and it

helps to eliminate some test anxiety for the students.

The annotated portfolio can be used to provide the instructor with a sample of the students' creative work. Using this technique, students would be asked to come up with images, ideas, related materials, illustrations, graphs, etc. to coincide with the material discussed and to provide a written connection. This exercise helps the students to tie in the material with something relevant and to develop higher thinking abilities and provides the instructor with information on the students' understanding of the material.

The last assessment activity mentioned is the concept maps. According to Angelo and Cross, who wrote *Classroom Assessment Techniques*, concept maps are student drawn diagrams or drawings that reflect the mental connections between a major concept the instructor focuses on. This activity prompts students to reflect on their own ideas and how they relate to the subject reviewed by the instructor.

There are numerous assessment activities that propel higher level thinking in students and provide feedback to the instructor. By having topic specific feedback, the instructor can adjust his or her lessons accordingly to enhance student learning.

REFERENCES

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