

## CATS – CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

- Pro and Con Grid – At one time or another, most people have jotted down quick lists of pros and cons to help them think more clearly about a pressing decision. The Pro and Con Grid turns that familiar decision-making exercise into a simple CAT with many possible applications.
- The Muddiest Point – This technique consists of asking students to jot down a quick response to one question: “What was the muddiest point (most confusing part) in \_\_\_\_\_?” The focus of the Muddiest point assessment might be a lecture, a discussion, a homework assignment, a film, or a lab.
- A Word Journal – The Word Journal prompts a two-part response. First, the student summarizes a short text in a single word. Second, the student writes a paragraph or two explaining why he or she chose that particular word to summarize the text. The completed response to the Word Journal is an abstract or a synopsis of the focus text.
- Minute Paper – The Minute Paper provides a quick and extremely simple way to collect written feedback on student learning. To use the Minute Paper, an instructor stops class two or three minutes early and asks student to respond briefly to some variation on the following two questions: “What was the most important thing you learned during this class?” and “What important question remains unanswered?”
- Problem Recognition Tasks – This CAT presents students with a few examples of common problem types. The students’ task is to recognize and identify the particular type of problem each example represents.
- Content, Form, and Function Outlines – This CAT is also called “What, How, and Why Outlines. To respond to it, the student carefully analyzes the “what” (content), “how” (form), and “why” (function) of a particular message. That message may be a poem, a newspaper story, a critical essay, a billboard, a magazine advertisement, or a television commercial. The student writes brief notes answering the “what, how, and why” questions in an outline format that can be quickly read and assessed.
- One-Sentence Summary – The simple technique challenges students to answer the questions “Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why?” (represented by the letters WDWWWWHW) about a given topic, and then to synthesize those answers into a single, informative, grammatical, and long summary sentence.
- Concept Maps – Concept Maps are drawings or diagrams showing the mental connections that students make between a major concept the instructor focuses on and other concepts they have learned. To prompt students to make Concept Maps, we might ask them to sketch the important features of the “geography” around major concepts such as democracy, racism, art, or free trade.