

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Tune into Teaching, Back-to-School Series, 2015

1. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE PROBE

This is short survey that can be used to provide an opportunity for students to complete a short survey at the beginning of your course or before any new unit or topic. The survey alerts the students to topics the course will cover and gives them a chance to share what they already know.

Tips:

- Focus questions on the level of knowledge in the course (e.g., basic facts, assumptions, understandings, misconceptions)
- Ask about a dozen questions to gauge background in key concepts
- Phrase questions as multiple choice or true/false questions or agree/disagree for easy feedback – possibly include a few open-ended questions
- Share results as soon as you can – students will appreciate knowing the results of their input.

Online Implementation: Set up a survey in your learning management system – it is a fast and easy collection of data.

2. STUDENT SURVEY FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is a short survey related to previously taught content. It becomes an informal means for students and instructor(s) to monitor progress.

Tips:

- Set aside five minutes in class for students to complete the survey.
- Create a few questions for students. Include a rating scale for each question, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Students rate how they are feeling about the course content, about their understanding on certain topics and gauging how comfortable they feel about particular concepts going into a mid-term or exam.
- Students can submit the self-assessments to the instructor or TAs in order for them to gauge what concepts are confusing or clear. When names are attached instructors can then provide individuals with additional support; without names instructors can look for patterns and accordingly monitor and adjust instructional support.
- A benefit is that students have the opportunity to think about their own learning and where they need to focus their effort.

Online Implementation:

1) Set up an online **Test Tool** in your learning management system. Assure students that their answers will not be graded. Select the feedback option in the Test Tool for students to view feedback on each questions and response.

2) Use the **Journal Tool** in your learning management system for comment and self-reflection. Settings include the option for comments to be privately with the instructor or public to the course for other students to read.

Excerpts from: Knaack, L. (2011). A practical handbook for educators. Whitby, ON: de Sitter Publications, pp. 40-44.
Barkley, E.F. (2010). Student Engagement techniques. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.



3. OPERATION OUTLINE

This is group activity where students work together to fill in the blanks found in an outline/handout you have created that focuses on key topics. It helps in determining how well students are understanding the course and gives students an idea of how to organize a study guide on key concepts.

Tips:

- Organize students in groups of 3-4.
- Allocate about 10 minutes to complete the task.
- Hand out an incomplete outline related to a recent topic
- To save paper, upload a digital version of the incomplete outline and have one student (with a laptop) download and be the recorder for their group
- The incomplete outline might include sub-titles, key concepts, important facts, and principles
- There has to be important content missing and the outline has to look incomplete

4. CONCEPT MAP

Concept maps are wonderful ways for students to organize their understanding of a topic in a visual way. Students are also able to share their conceptual learning. Either on chart paper or in one of the many free concept mapping web sites, students will enjoy working with their peers and being creative in constructing the map.

Tips:

- Share some examples of concept maps
- Arrange students into small groups of 3-4
- Students depict the major themes and ideas of the course in an organizational scheme that they create together
- A representative from each group shares the concept map with the class, or in a larger class, with one other group
- The instructor could ask students to create a rough draft of their own concept map first – this might increase individual accountability and help the groups progress faster and with more discussion

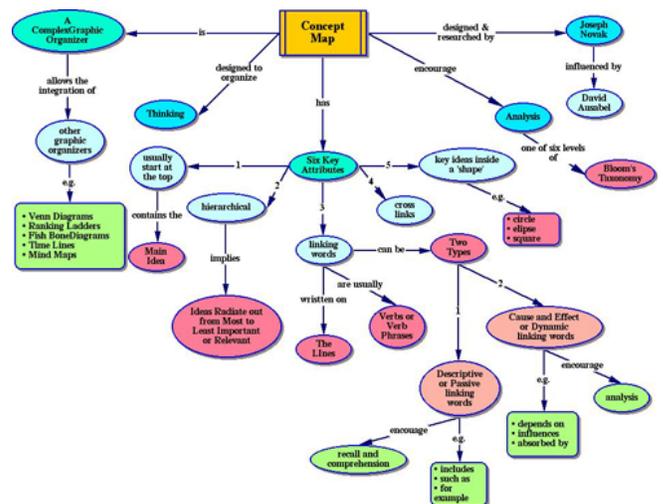
- The group’s task is to scour their notes, text book, and possibly the Internet to fill in the outline – they should be able to use any resource to complete the task
- You can choose to take up the outline in class and share the complete version with your students or you can collect and analyze for reporting at the next class.

Online Implementation:

- 1) During a web-conferencing/webinar create smaller groups and assign each group the task of completing the outline whiteboard slide, or provide students with a MS Word file using the **Application Sharing** feature. One student in the group is assigned to be the recorder. Files are sent back to the instructor online for review.
- 2) Using the **Group Assignment** tool in your learning management system course, provide students with a MS Word file that can be downloaded to complete and then uploaded to the online course link for instructor review.

- Uploading the maps to the course web site is a great way for students to share their understanding across the class.

Online Implementation: During a web-conferencing/webinar create smaller groups and assign each group to create a concept map using a whiteboard slide. These group whiteboard slides can be downloaded and viewed offline following the webinar, or shared in the main webinar room during the session to promote discussion amongst all student participants.



5. TICKET OUT THE DOOR

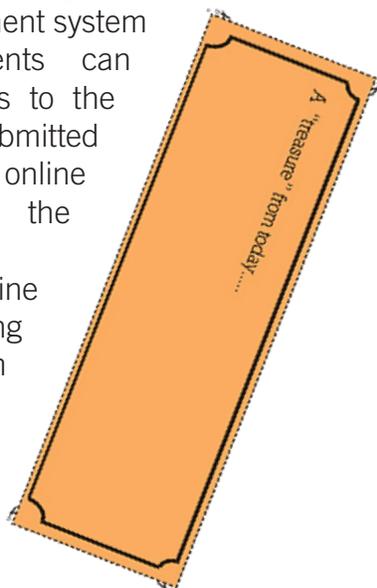
A ticket out the door is simply a sheet of paper on which students respond to questions and hand in before they leave class. The tickets are anonymous and provide instructors with a quick overview of what students are learning and where there are gaps.

Tips:

- Near the end of class, ask students to get out half a sheet of scrap paper or provide a template.
- The prompts can target any one or combination of the following: “muddy points”, summaries, questions, key points
- Post two to three question about the class you have just conducted
- You could ask both a lower thinking question that simply asks them to
- show that they were listening and ask a higher level thinking question that would require a few sentences to explain based on what was taught
- The response should take no more than 2-5 minutes.

Online Implementation:

- 1) Provide students with a ticket-out-the-door template file that is posted in your online course web site. Create an Assignment item in your learning management system course where students can submit their responses to the course web site. Submitted files can be viewed online or downloaded to the instructor’s computer.
- 2) Set up an online Survey in your learning management system course using the short-answer question type for fast and easy collection of data.



6. CONFERENCE

A conference is an out-of-class individual or small group meeting to ascertain how students are doing and provide feedback. Depending on your schedule and the number of students, organizing them into small groups can be an efficient way to meet many in shorter time periods (e.g., 15 minute blocks of time).



Tips

- Ask student to sign up for a time
- Post a few questions you are going to ask students; this gives them a heads-up on

what to expect

- The conference can provide time for students to clarify points, to check for understanding, and to ask questions
- Conferences can take place at any time throughout the course
- Students will appreciate the time you spend with them and your personalized feedback
- If you hold conferences during the first half of the course, students will know where your office is and feel more comfortable to approach you for help during the remainder of the course.

Online Implementation:

- 1) Synchronous (real-time) discussions can be held online using the audio, video and chat tools available in web conferencing/webinar software. Use the Chat tool in your learning management system to read and record messages.
- 2) Asynchronous discussions do not have a timing requirement and students post comments in their own time. Create a Discussion Board forum for student groups to respond to questions and post comments.

Excerpts from: L. Knaack (2011). A practical handbook for educators. Whitby, ON: de Sitter Publications, pp. 40-44.

