**Ресурс:**

https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/48-critical-thinking-questions-any-content-area/

[Mind Map templates](https://www.imindq.com/mind-maps-gallery)

**What Are the Benefits of Mind Mapping?**

[Mind mapping software](http://www.imindq.com/) offers both students and teachers a number of benefits relating to presenting and understanding information. [As noted by the BBC](http://www.bbcactive.com/BBCActiveIdeasandResources/UsingMindMappingTools.aspx), mind maps are “highly effective visual aids that enable students to group together different ideas and enable teachers to present ideas visually and assess their students’ conceptual development and understanding.”

In addition to seeing information in a way that helps students remember more of what they are being taught, they are also able to increase their critical thinking and memory skills. Long after their days of cramming for finals are over, the skills they sharpen by using mind maps will translate to their professional lives. For students that rely on visual learning methods in order to complete projects and study for exams, mind maps make it easier to communicate thought processes so their teachers and classmates can better understand their ideas.

By using software to create a mind map, students are not limited to the space available on paper. Instead they are able to develop collapsible branches off of their main idea and constantly move items around as needed. This feature keeps the mind working, and the creative juices flowing, so that students can continue to build their ideas without distractions or interruptions. Here are additional student benefits:

* **Stay current on assignments**
* **Collaborate more easily with classmates**
* **Create presentations faster**

In addition to assisting students with learning new concepts and working through difficult problems, mind mapping also directly benefits their teachers and professors. Not only can educators use mind mapping to lay out lesson plans and prepare lectures for a class, they can also use it to foster creativity among students. This technique allows teachers to show students a new way of thinking about and tackling problems, as well as a way to create discussion and debate about a topic. For example, a high school history teacher could have students use mind mapping to develop arguments for the North and South prior to the Civil War.

Mind maps also allow teachers to gain insight into their students’ thought processes and see the development of their work. This allows them to assess strengths and weaknesses, while also monitoring growth. Teachers are also able to see where they can use targeted lesson plans for individual students, or as a group, to provide additional resources and information that helps them learn the material.

**How Can We Use Mind Mapping in Education?**

Mind mapping has numerous uses in education, and is being used by students and teachers alike. While many students choose to develop a mind map for a particular assignment, others find that segmenting all of the information they’ve learned over the course of a semester best helps them remember the material before a final exam. Here are some ways that students and teachers can use a mind map to improve their productivity:

* **Taking notes**. It can be tough to remember everything a professor says during a two-hour lecture. Mind maps act as outlines that help students remember the overall themes of a topic, all the way down to the smallest details they’ll need to recall later.
* **Project planning**. Have an essay coming up or a presentation to your class? Mind mapping allows you to organize your time and thoughts so your work can be completed one step at a time. Easily communicate your talking points with your audience. When you use software, you can distribute your mind map to the entire class so they can see how your points relate to one another.
* **Problem solving**. Both teachers and students come across problems that need to be solved over the course of a class. Mind mapping helps you see the various options ahead of you so you can find the solution that is best for the problem. An example of this is a logic puzzle that has many methods of solving it, but only one correct solution. A mind map keeps your work in order so you can access the information you need.

Not only does mind mapping help a student understand a theory or write a term paper, it can also help him or her learn a new language. You can learn more about the benefits of using mind mapping software for education by visiting iMindQ’s official website at [http://www.imindq.com.](http://www.imindq.com/)

**Sources:**

1. <http://lifehacker.com/how-to-use-mind-maps-to-unleash-your-brains-creativity-1348869811>
2. <http://www.bbcactive.com/BBCActiveIdeasandResources/UsingMindMappingTools.aspx>
3. Future Technology image via [Michelle Zappa](https://twitter.com/michellzappa)

**20 Simple Assessment Strategies You Can Use Every Day**

by [**Saga Briggs**](https://twitter.com/SagaMilena)

The ultimate goal of teaching is understanding. But sometimes it’s easier to talk than to teach, as we all know, especially when we need to cover a lot of material in a short amount of time. We hope students will understand, if not now then before test time, and we keep our fingers crossed that their results will indicate we’ve done our job. The problem is, we often [rely on these tests to measure understanding](http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/the-perils-of-standardized-testing/) and then we move on. There isn’t always time to address weaknesses and misunderstandings after the tests have been graded, and by that time it’s too late for students to be interested.

Below are 22 simple assessment strategies and tips to help you become more frequent in your teaching, planning, and curriculum design.

**22 Simple Assessment Strategies & Tips You Can Use Every Day**

**1. An open-ended question that gets them writing/talking**

Avoid yes/no questions and phrases like “Does this make sense?” In response to these questions, students usually answer “yes”. So of course it’s surprising when several students later admit that they’re lost. To help students grasp ideas in class, ask open-ended questions that require students that get students writing/talking. They will undoubtedly reveal more than you would’ve thought to ask directly.

**2. Ask students to reflect**

During the last five minutes of class ask students to reflect on the lesson and write down what they’ve learned. Then, ask them to consider how they would apply this concept or skill in a practical setting.

**3. Use quizzes**

Give a short quiz at the end of class to check for comprehension.

**4. Ask students to summarize**

Have students summarize or paraphrase important concepts and lessons. This can be done orally, visually, or otherwise.

**5. Hand signals**

Hand signals can be used to rate or indicate students’ understanding of content. Students can show anywhere from five fingers to signal maximum understanding to one finger to signal minimal understanding. This strategy requires engagement by all students and allows the teacher to check for understanding within a large group.

**6. Response cards**

Index cards, signs, whiteboards, magnetic boards, or other items are simultaneously held up by all students in class to indicate their response to a question or problem presented by the teacher. Using response devices, the teacher can easily note the responses of individual students while teaching the whole group.

**7. Four corners**

A quick and easy snapshot of student understanding, Four Corners provides an opportunity for student movement while permitting the teacher to monitor and assess understanding. The teacher poses a question or makes a statement. Students then move to the appropriate corner of the classroom to indicate their response to the prompt. For example, the corner choices might include “I strongly agree,” “I strongly disagree,” “I agree somewhat,” and “I’m not sure.”

**8. Think-pair-share**

Students take a few minutes to think about the question or prompt. Next, they pair with a designated partner to compare thoughts before sharing with the whole class.

**9. Choral reading**

Students mark text to identify a particular concept and chime in, reading the marked text aloud in unison with the teacher. This strategy helps students develop fluency; differentiate between the reading of statements and questions; and practice phrasing, pacing, and reading dialogue.

**10. One question quiz**

Ask a single focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute or two. You can quickly scan the written responses to assess student understanding.

**11. Socratic seminar**

Students ask questions of one another about an essential question, topic, or selected text. The questions initiate a conversation that continues with a series of responses and additional questions. Students learn to formulate questions that address issues to facilitate their own discussion and arrive at a new understanding.

**12. 3-2-1**

Students consider what they have learned by responding to the following prompt at the end of the lesson: 3) things they learned from your lesson; 2) things they want to know more about; and 1) questions they have. The prompt stimulates student reflection on the lesson and helps to process the learning.

**13. Ticket out the door**

Students write in response to a specific prompt for a short period of time. Teachers collect their responses as a “ticket out the door” to check for students’ understanding of a concept taught. This exercise quickly generates multiple ideas that could be turned into longer pieces of writing at a later time.

**14. Journal reflections**

Students write their reflections on a lesson, such as what they learned, what caused them difficulty, strategies they found helpful, or other lesson-related topics. Students can reflect on and process lessons. By reading student journals, teachers can identify class and individual misconceptions and successes.

**15. Formative pencil–paper assessment**

Students respond individually to short, pencil–paper formative assessments of skills and knowledge taught in the lesson. Teachers may elect to have students self-correct. The teacher collects assessment results to monitor individual student progress and to inform future instruction. Both student and teacher can quickly assess whether the student acquired the intended knowledge and skills. This is a formative assessment, so a grade is not the intended purpose.

**16. Misconception check**

Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a concept you’re covering. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and to explain why.

**17. Analogy prompt**

Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt: “the concept being covered is like \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”

**18. Practice frequency**

Check for understanding at least three times a lesson, minimum.

**19. Use variety**

Teachers should use enough different individual and whole group techniques to check understanding that they accurately know what all students know. More than likely, this means during a single class the same technique should not be repeated.

**20. Make it useful**

The true test is whether or not you can adjust your course or continue as planned based on the information received in each check. Do you need to stop and start over? Pull a few students aside for three minutes to re-teach? Or move on?

**21. Peer instruction**

Perhaps the most accurate way to check for understanding is to have one student try to [teach another student what she’s learned](http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/peer-teaching/). If she can do that successfully, it’s clear she understood your lesson.

**22. “Separate what you do and don’t understand”**

Whether making a t-chart, drawing a concept map, or using some other means, have the students not simply list what they think they know, but what they don’t know as well. This won’t be as simple as it sounds–we’re usually not aware of what we don’t know. They’ll also often know more or less than they can identify themselves, which makes this strategy a bit crude. But that’s okay–the goal isn’t for them to be precise and complete in their self-evaluation the goal is for you to gain insight as to what they do and don’t know.

And seeing what they can even begin to articulate on their own is an excellent starting point here.

This post was written by Saga Briggins and was first publish by on [*opencolleges.edu.au*](http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/21-ways-to-check-for-student-understanding/#ixzz30n5SFAYV); 20 Simple Assessment Strategies You Can Use Every Day; adapted image attribution flickr user[*tulanepublicrelations*](https://www.flickr.com/photos/tulanesally/2759729091/)