

### Checks for Learning Before Instruction

Checks for Learning before instruction can be used at the beginning of a course or unit to yield information on students’ knowledge, assumptions, misconceptions, and gaps in learning. They are closely aligned with your course and unit outcomes and activities (see [Course Design](#)). You can use the results to inform your teaching, and students can use them to assess their progress and study needs.

What Am I Assessing?	What Is It?	How Is It Done?	What Do I Do with the Results?
<b>Course or Unit Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Formal pre-test:</b> <i>A check for learning before instruction to provide baseline information on key concepts to instructors and students</i>	Administer test on key concepts, terms, knowledge you are targeting in the course. These can be departmental or linked to a professional organization.	Analyze results to determine students’ knowledge and skills and adjust materials accordingly. May be repeated at course end.
	<b>LMS Quizzes &amp; Surveys:</b> <i>A shortened check for learning to provide baseline information on key concepts to instructors and students</i>	Create a series of multiple-choice questions to provide required baseline information on student knowledge/understanding of key concepts. For help on <a href="#">designing multiple choice questions</a> , see the linked guide.  Post your quiz/survey to <a href="#">Canvas</a> as an assignment for the first class. Explain that you will track who responded, but not how they responded. Use software to calculate results and use results to inform course design. Share results and impact on course design with students.	Analyze results and revise teaching plans according to what students know.
	<b>Common Sense Inventory:</b> <i>A check for learning that offers simple and quick insights into what ideas and understandings students bring to your course</i>	Make a list of 10 to 20 statements related to course content, including commonly held misconceptions. Have students mark "true" or "false" next to each statement. Can be done with survey tool such as Qualtrics or Canvas.	Analyze results to determine students’ knowledge and skills and adjust materials accordingly
	<b>ConcepTests:</b> <i>A check for learning that focuses on one key concept of your learning outcomes for a coming unit</i>	Ask students higher-order multiple choice question focused on key concept to determine what they know or identify misconceptions. Using <a href="#">ConcepTests</a> , students first analyze the question individually and then in pairs or small groups. Can be used with clickers or manually.	Quickly determine where students’ knowledge and skills are and do some in-the-moment teaching.



	<p><b>Concept maps:</b>  <i>A check for learning that uses graphic organizers to illustrate relationships between concepts and ideas that you and students can use to see knowledge, gaps in learning, assumptions, misconceptions</i></p>	<p>Create a focus question that clearly specifies the issue that the concept map should address (see example from H.W. Perry at UT School of Law: <a href="#">“What is the rule of law?”</a>) Have students, individually or in groups, generate a list of relevant concepts and complete the map.</p>	<p>Diagnose how ready students are to understand course materials or concepts and determine next steps. Give students the opportunity to revise at key points throughout the course to see their learning. Several online tools, such as <a href="#">lucidchart.com</a>, can be used to generate the template or to use online</p>
<p><b>Self-Awareness as Learner</b></p>	<p><b>LMS Self-Assessments &amp; Surveys:</b>  <i>A check for learning that allows students to assess their strengths and needs in learning</i></p>	<p>Create a series of multiple choice questions on targeted concepts and vocabulary using the stem: “How familiar are you with....?” As your responses, use the following or a variation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Have never heard of it</li> <li>B. Have heard of it but don’t remember what it is</li> <li>C. Have some idea what it is, but not too clear</li> <li>D. I know what it is, and could explain what it’s for</li> <li>E. I know what it is, when to use it, and could use</li> </ul> <p>This can be done using Canvas. To create using this LMS, see <a href="#">multiple-choice questions</a>. When complete, post to Canvas as an assignment. Explain that you will track who responded and the results as a class, but not how individuals responded.</p>	<p>Use software to calculate results. You can use to plan instruction, and students can use to plan areas for deeper study.</p>

