

# Teaching Strategies for Large Classes Reference Sheet

1. **The pause procedure** – stop the lecture every 13-18 minutes (short breaks allow students to return to better listening efficiency). Have students either compare notes and look for gaps in their understanding of the content just covered, or work together to pose a question from their notes to clarify their understanding.
2. **Note-taking pairs** – a more structured derivative of the pause procedure:
  - a. Students individually take notes of the major points from a body of content, such as a lecture or a text chapter;
  - b. Students form pairs, at your direction or by choosing partners.;
  - c. Partner A begins by summarizing the main points from a section of the content to Partner B, who offers corrections and additional information.;
  - d. Partner B summarizes the next section, and Partner A offers corrections and additional information.;
  - e. The partners continue to alternate sharing summaries, corrections, and additional information until they have completed checking their notes.
3. **Think/pair/share** – students write down their initial response to a question, brain-storming prompt, or problem-solving case, then pair up with a neighbor to clarify and expand their answers, and then shares in a general class discussion.
4. **Polling** – use platforms like Polleverywhere.com, Mentimeter, Sli.do, Padlet, or Kahoot! to do quick in-class surveys and polls to check for understanding as you move through course content.
5. **Exam wrappers** – short handouts that have students review, reflect on, and analyze their performance (and use the instructor's feedback) to adapt their future learning.
6. **Exit/Entrance tickets** – index cards, post-it notes, online quizzes or polls that students complete near the end of class or at the very beginning that identifies questions, areas of confusion, requests for deeper explanations, or specific things they've learned.
7. **Self-explaining** – “Why are you doing that?” or “How did you do that?” have students explain their thinking and processes as they complete an assignment. This is handed in alongside the assignment.

## References for additional reading

Ambrose, S.A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M.C., & Norman, M.K. (2010) How learning works: 7 research-based principles for smart teaching. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Barkley, E., Howell-Major, C., & K.P. Cross (2014) Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lang, J. (2016) Small teaching: Everyday lessons from the science of learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

MacGregor, J, Cooper, J.L., Smith, K.A., & Robinson P. (2000) Strategies for energizing large classes: From small groups to learning communities. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ruhl, K. L., Hughes, C. A., & Schloss, P. J. (1987). Using the pause procedure to enhance lecture recall. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children*, 10(1), 14-18.



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**Office for Faculty Advancement**

For workshops, one-to-one consultations, or additional resources and materials for teaching and professional development, contact us at [faculty@montclair.edu](mailto:faculty@montclair.edu), 973-655-3276, or visit our website ([montclair.edu/faculty-advancement](http://montclair.edu/faculty-advancement)).