

In-Class Review Techniques

The brain needs repeated exposures to new material, but *instructors often underestimate the amount of review students need*. Students need multiple opportunities for trial-and-error learning because humans learn by eliminating incorrect or bad choices. These learning opportunities should be followed by *frequent feedback and review*. Below are quick and interesting review techniques, many of which incorporate brain-friendly novelty and movement.



1. **Pair share.** Working in pairs, students tell each other what they know about a topic; each can ask for clarification from the partner. Students are given a specific amount of time, usually 3-4 minutes. This activity can also be done as a “walking review.” Students go outside the classroom and walk in the hall, but they have to be back when the time is up. They will probably need 5-7 minutes for a walking review. This is a good class opener to review the previous class session.
2. **Inner circle/outer circle.** Class members form two circles with an equal number of students in each, with one circle inside the other. Students in the circles face each other: students in the inner circle face out; students in outer circle face in. Leave plenty of space between each student and those on either side of him or her. The teacher asks the review questions. One person answers; the other adds and corrects. One circle rotates after each question so that partners keep changing. Students in the inner circle and the outer circle alternate answering first.
3. **Koosh ball toss.** In groups of 3-4, students toss the ball to each other. Each time a person catches the ball, the person has to say one specific thing he or she has learned about the day’s topic. This also gets students on their feet, which they welcome!
4. **Cloze procedure.** Students fill in a cloze procedure review that you have prepared and duplicated. Students can answer individually first and then compare answers, or for variety, have students work in pairs, in small groups, or as a class as they complete the cloze sentences or passage. You can read a cloze procedure review aloud and give a clue (such as “Starts with ‘t’”) for any that stump them. Have them write in the answers.
5. **Crossword puzzle.** In small groups, students create 3-4 crossword puzzle questions and answers related to the day’s lesson or topic. Groups then combine their efforts to

create one larger crossword puzzle (or perhaps two). Puzzle parts and puzzles can be written on the board or on large sheets of paper.

6. **Free write/journal entry.** Instruct students, “Take five minutes to write everything you now know about _____.” This activity can also be done at the beginning of class to check what students understood from the previous class session or what they already know about a new topic. It can then be repeated at the end of the session, or it can simply be used at the end of a class session.
7. **Concept maps.** Have colored markers and blank paper available so that students can make these maps on the spot in class. If students work individually, they should be given time to compare their maps with another person’s and to add to and correct their own maps. You can also have students work in pairs to prepare one map for their “team.” Post the best maps.
8. **Keep it going.** On the board, on large sheets of paper tacked to the wall, or on pieces of paper, students (working in small groups) are given 2-3 minutes to write everything they can think of about a topic. When time is up, they change to the next section of the board, move to the next sheet of paper, or exchange papers with another group. They then have 2-3 minutes to add anything to that list. The process continues until the groups have run out of things to add.