



TEACHING TIPS FROM THE WTI: THE 1 MINUTE PAPER

Good writing assignments evoke a high level of critical thinking, help students wrestle productively with a course's big questions, and teach disciplinary ways of seeing, knowing, and doing. (Bean and Melzer 2)



How Kara Mowrey Uses 1 Minute Papers in Her EDUC1300 Classes

In EDUC 1300, I use these short, reflective writing assignments to challenge students to process their learning and academic performance. The class then typically debriefs individual experiences and overall findings as a group. My intent is to utilize the minute paper for classroom assessment and student participation. I've found these quick writing assignments engage students in a meaningful way without losing valuable class time in the process. I use One Minute Papers in a variety of ways before, during or after a lesson.

The SAC Writing & Thinking Institute, a project of the SAC Teaching & Learning Center, promotes the use of writing as an instructional tool for learning and critical thinking across the curriculum at San Antonio College.



What is a 1 Minute Paper?

One-Minute Papers are assigned in-class as focused quick writes where professors ask students to write for one minute on any question or topic the professor chooses. They are easy to implement and an extremely versatile teaching strategy. They could be written on 3x5 cards or scrap sheets of paper and collected or simply used for class discussion.

Before a Lesson or Class Starts:

Students are asked general questions to prime their minds for connecting with the material that is to be introduced. It is a structured way to fold students into class and into learning. Typically, I start the class with Quick Questions that are a 1 minute paper to get them moving into material.

- How have your time management strategies developed as you have started college?
- What is the best piece of advice you have received regarding college success? How has it helped you?

During a Lesson

While lecturing, I will often stop and ask students to write their thoughts about the lesson we are discussing. In EDUC 1300, we are focusing on strategies and practices that enhance their learning and success, so taking a minute to personalize the lesson and ask them how they might apply it has been quite impactful. These short papers get students active (rather than passively listening to me) and prime the pump for classroom discussion.

- As we have explored four approaches to motivation, which do you think is most applicable to you? Why?
- Knowing the causes of stress and the effects it can have on you as a student, how will you apply this information in the future?

After a Lesson or at the End of Class

One minute papers can also make an effective way to wrap up class. It gives students space to pull together what they have learned and consider areas they may need to explore more. I sometimes collected these papers to help me assess students' grasp of the class material and where I might need to reteach.

- What is the most significant or meaningful thing you learned in class today?
- If you were to summarize what you have learned today, how would you explain it to a peer who was absent?

Uses and Benefits of 1 Minute Papers

Such writing helps students to digest, apply, and challenge their thinking, achieving enough confidence to contribute fruitfully to class discussions. These short writing assignments also deliver quick, valuable feedback to instructors on what students are learning.