

# Why and How Do Students Activate Previous Knowledge?

Enhancing Effective Teaching Series(9)

The method of **activating previous knowledge** helps the students improve their understanding of new topics, links them to their previous knowledge, helps you to identify mistakes or deficiencies in their previous knowledge, and guides them to correct or enhance them.

Your activation of students' prior knowledge begins with providing an overview of the new topic or required concepts, and explaining their relationship to prior knowledge.

**Students' participation in activities and discussions enables you to identify misconceptions or inadequate information that may become an obstacle against students' understanding of new concepts and how to apply them.**

How do we involve students in activating their previous knowledge:

- Concept maps.
- Online surveys.
- Brainstorming.

Example of a quick prior knowledge survey (x):

- I haven't heard of x
- I've heard of x but don't understand it
- I have a clear understanding of x but have never used it
- I can understand it easily, as I have used it before