

SORTING TECHNIQUE

Purpose	The <i>Sorting Technique</i> provides students with the opportunity to identify and close any potential gaps in their knowledge or understanding of class material, and it helps students to process information. The technique is also valuable for instructors, who, too, can identify where gaps in knowledge or understanding have occurred and adapt future classes accordingly. In addition, they can recognize what prior knowledge students possess and adjust and reconsider course materials throughout the semester.
Directions	As in other activities (e.g. <i>Concept Mapping</i>), a topic's central terms are written on index cards. The instructor provides each student with one stack of cards containing all the central terms. Then students are asked to separate the stack into two piles: one for all concepts that are either completely unfamiliar or not entirely clear to them, and one for those that are known and clear. After the cards have been arranged in this way, students go through their piles of unknowns and look up the missing information (e.g. on slides, in a textbook, etc.), either by themselves or in pairs (to help each other close their gaps in knowledge together). The card of each recently illuminated and now understood term is moved from the stack of unknowns to the knowns. The task ends when all students have moved all of their unknowns or when the allotted time has ended, whichever comes first.
Parameters	<p>Group size: flexible</p> <p>Time required: 3-10min.</p> <p>Setup: flexible</p> <p>Materials: pre-prepared index cards, class materials such as textbooks etc. where necessary</p>
Helpful Tips	The <i>Sorting Technique</i> can be used in various contexts, e.g. for deepening the engagement with recently learned material (e.g. after a lecture) or to contextualize central terms. In this way, the strategy facilitates the construction of knowledge.
Online Implementation	— The task of sorting the cards is best done asynchronously (e.g. via Moodle or heiBOX). The synchronous phase of class can then be used to answer any remaining questions.

Adapted from:
Wahl, D. (2013). *Lernumgebungen erfolgreich gestalten: Vom trägen Wissen zum kompetenten Handeln*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.