Assessing Students’ Prior Knowledge Strategies

Common Sense Inventory:
- Make a list of 10-15 statements related to course content, including commonly held misconceptions.
- Have students mark "true" or "false" next to each statement.

Student Perceived Self-Assessment:
(also known as Background Knowledge Probe) Angelo & Cross, 1993
- Ask students to respond in two or three sentences to a question or circle a response indicating perceived level of knowledge.
  Example: The Golden Triangle
  a) Have never heard of this place.
  b) Have heard of it, but don't really know where it is.
  c) Have some idea where this is, but not too clear.
  d) Have a clear idea where this is and can explain.

Minute Paper (Angelo & Cross, 1993)
- Decide what prior knowledge is necessary for the course.
- Write a Minute Paper prompt (or question) that hits on the above.
- Hand out index cards or half-sheets of paper.
- Let students know how much time they will have (two to three minutes per question), what kinds of answers you want (words, short sentences, a list).

Surveys or Polling
- Create a series of questions on content that can be delivered through eClass Moodle, Google Forms, or Student Response Systems (eg. i-clickers, TopHat, etc.)

Concept Mapping
- Ask students to create a visual representation of the connections/relationships between elements of a topic.

KWL
- Have students chart out three categories 1) what they know on a topic, 2) what they want to know about the topic, and then after completion 3) what they learned.

Adapted from http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/assessing-student-learning/what-do-students-already-know.html