Check Early, Check Often

The earlier we check in, the easier it to adjust a lesson as needed.

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What is formative assessment? Why does it matter?

Checking Comprehension = Data Collection

If you ask a class a question, the most likely ones to *volunteer* an answer are the ones who feel confident. Collecting reliable data means either checking in with a varied sample of students at different levels of ability or checking in with all students.

Asking Thoughtful Questions

What are some routine questions you use to check for understanding?

General Questions lead to…

Specific Questions lead to…

Objective:

What questions might you ask a student to see if she can meet this objective?

Checking In With the Whole Class

In the following activities, to avoid having students copy, give a count before students all show their answers at the same time (one, two, three!).

Slates: Give students mini-white boards, blank paper or i-pads and have them write and hold up answers to questions.

Thumb Scan: Ask students to agree (thumbs up) or disagree (thumbs down). They can also answer yes/no questions this way.

Snaps or Stomps: Snap twice if you agree and stomp twice if you disagree.

Raise Hands: Raise your hand if you got the same answer (or if you got a different answer). Students can also hold up different fingers to show their answers choices.

*Exit Ticket***:** Students say or write something as they leave class that day. Stand by the door to collect answers. Ask one or two questions that have students show what they learned (you can even ask: What is one thing you learned today?).

Take a Stand: The general idea of this activity is for students to express agreement or disagreement with another student's answer to a question. This can be done as a whole class, or you can call on an individual student. For suggestions on having the whole class respond, see below. The benefits include checking comprehension of more than one student and showing students that their contributions in class are valuable. To make the activity more valuable, ask students to explain reasons their agreement or disagreement. Try to avoid only asking students to Take a Stand if an answer is wrong.

Thoughtful Observations

Standardize the Format for Answers: Have students write their responses in the same location in their notebook or on the text. If students are reading a text, they can do a task while they read so you have something to observe. For example, they can circle topic sentences, underline key words, **or** mark the margins with a symbol that you taught them.

Tracking, not watching: while students are doing an activity such as a worksheet or paired conversation, track errors and misunderstandings. You may wish to choose one learning goal to focus on while you make observations.

Tally the problems and successes

A Culture Where Errors are Important

Mistakes are a normal part of learning. It is difficult to find out where students are at if they are hiding their errors. How can we create a culture where errors are important? How do you react when you make a mistake in front of students?

Planning for Flexibility

What might you do if you discover that half the class is on target and the other half isn't there yet?

Use Lots of Routines to Foster Independence

Off to work I go!

Call on Students with Tailored Questions

Assign Pairs of Students

One a bit **more** skilled in the topic.

One a bit **less** skilled in the topic.

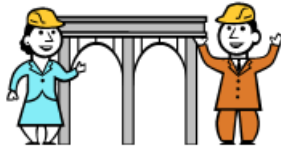## A Cheat Sheet or a Head Start for Lower Level Students

Answer at Least...

Answer at least four questions and keep going if you have time.

Keep Going

- Tell me more about that.
- What is another way to do that?
- Can you ask Sonya another question about shopping?
- Write two more.

Higher Level Students Provide Models and Examples for Other Students

Show What You Know with or without the Extra Support

_____ is going to _____ this weekend.

Fill in the Blank with a Different Word.

You can write to your family by _____.

- email
- mail
- text message