

Further Reading

'Principles of Instruction: Research Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know'
Article by Barak Rosenshine

Checking for Understanding

Guide the direction of teaching and remedy common misconceptions

Checking for Understanding

Checking for Understanding (CFU) is a fundamental aspect of effective teaching. It involves teachers consistently finding out what students know about the material being taught. Checking for understanding serves as a means for teachers to adjust their teaching methods and improve learning by assessing student understanding in real time, allowing them to make necessary instructional decisions such as re-teaching during the lesson.

"Checking for student understanding at each point can help students learn the material with fewer errors."

- Barak Rosenshine



Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction

According to Barak Rosenshine in his 2012 article, 'Principles of Instruction' effective teaching involves asking questions and checking students' responses to help them practice new information and connect it with their prior knowledge. Rosenshine's research suggests that teachers should ask questions during instruction to facilitate the practice of new material. The most effective teachers engage all students by having them share answers with peers, summarise key points, write responses, or express agreement with others.

80%
Success Rate



CFU guarantees high student success rates. Aim for 80% + so that you can respond and adjust your teaching.

09
Questions

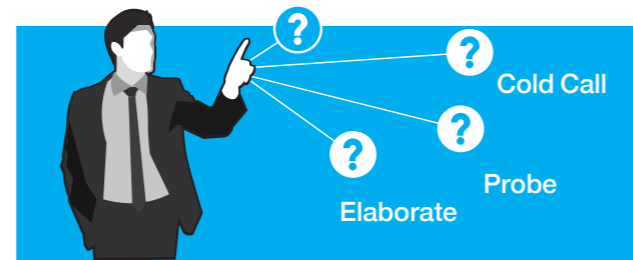


The least effective teachers only asked 9 questions in an entire lesson resulting in more error prone learning.

23/40
Minutes

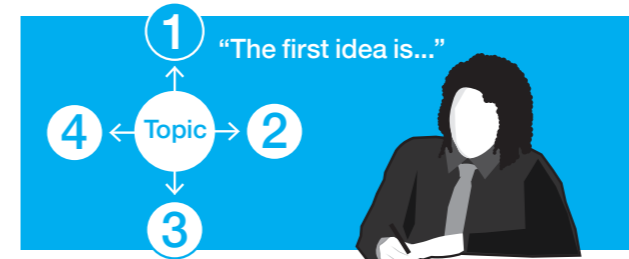


The most effective teachers spent 23 of a 40 minute lesson explaining, questioning, & giving working examples.



Questioning

A straightforward and effective methods for assessing student knowledge is through questioning. Teachers can employ various questioning strategies to gauge understanding. These include cold calling students and asking follow up questions to probe their knowledge such as, "Why do you think that is?" Elaborative interrogation questions such as "Why is this true?" are also powerful to check the depth of students' understanding and help them connect their knowledge to existing schema.



Summarising

Frequently having students summarise what they are learning is a highly effective method for improving their understanding and memory of new information. Additionally, it allows teachers to gauge whether students have a firm grasp of crucial concepts. By observing which topics students either avoid or find challenging to summarise, teachers can identify areas that may need further attention in the next lesson. Ask students to verbally summarise the main steps or write key ideas in dot point form.

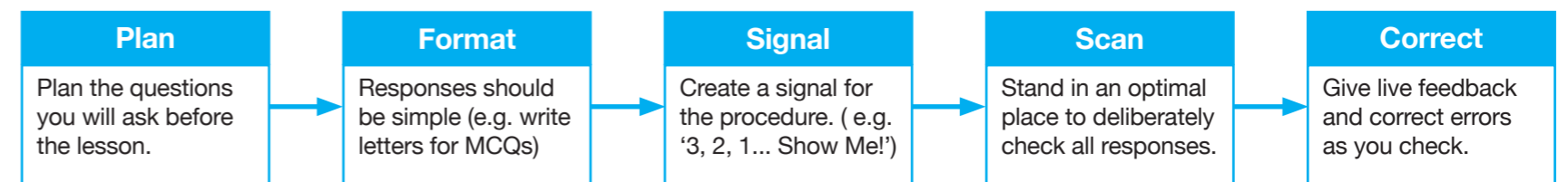


Choice Statements

Present students with a few choice statements or questions and have them select a response. For example, 'True or False', 'Agree or Disagree' and share it via a mini-whiteboard, or hand signal (thumbs up or down). This efficient technique is particularly effective to use in checking students' prior knowledge or potential misconceptions before beginning new instruction. It also enables learners to elaborate on the material and "augment connections to other learning in their long-term memory."



Utilise mini-whiteboards to quickly collect whole class responses and check for students' understanding:



Correcting

Another highly efficient and effective method for checking students' understanding is through identifying and correcting common misconceptions. This involves presenting students with a common misconception or procedural error and evaluating their ability to identify and rectify it. Collect whole-class responses or circulate the room purposefully checking students' work and providing feedback on how to rectify specific errors.

Visualising

Getting students to draw or create visual representations, such as graphic organisers and concept maps, can be useful in checking the depth of their understanding. Have students create a visual or symbolic representation (for example a graphic organiser, simple table, or concept map) of information and



prepared to explain their graphic to a partner. Picturing techniques are especially useful to see if students understand how various concepts or elements of a process are related. Model this process over time so that students know how to create effective visual maps independently. For example in English: Ask students to draw a visual web of factors influencing the growth of a protagonist in a novel.

Testing

Use short informal assessments, such as quizzes or exit tickets to check the depth of students' understanding. Conducting weekly (or even monthly) low stakes quizzes is an effective method of checking understanding and monitoring students' progress. Try simple paper quizzes or whole class quizzes using digital tools (such as Quizizz) to get more nuanced data on all students.