From Understanding by Design
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Pages 166 & 167

Techniques to Check for Understanding

1. **Index Card Summaries and Questions**
   Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions:

   (Side 1)
   Based on our study of (*unit topic*), list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement.

   (Side 2)
   Identify something about (*unit topic)* that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.

2. **Hand Signals**
   Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process:

   - I understand_____ and can explain it (*e.g., thumbs up*).
   - I do not yet understand _____ (e.g., *thumbs down*).
   - I'm not completely sure about _____ (e.g., *wave hand*).

3. **Question Box or Board**
   Establish a location (e.g., question box, bulletin board, or e-mail address) where students may leave or post questions about concepts, principals, or processes that they do not understand. This technique may benefit students who are uncomfortable saying aloud that they do not understand.

4. **Analogy Prompt**
   Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt:
   (*A designated concept, principle, or process*) is like _____ because _____.

5. **Visual Representation (Web or Concept Map)**
   Ask students to create a visual representation (e.g., web, concept map, flow chart, or time line) to show the elements or components of a topic or process. This technique effectively reveals whether students understand the relationships among the elements.

6. **Oral Questioning**
   Use the following questions and follow-up probes regularly to check for understanding:

- How is _____ similar to/different from _____?
- What are the characteristics/parts of _____?
- In what other ways might we show show/illustrate _____?
- What is the big idea, key concept, moral in _____?
- How does _____ relate to _____?
- What ideas/details can you add to _____?
- Give an example of _____?
- What is wrong with _____?
- What might you infer from _____?
- What conclusions might be drawn from _____?
- What question are we trying to answer? What problem are we trying to solve?
- What are you assuming about _____?
- What might happen if _____?
- What criteria would you use to judge/evaluate _____?
- What evidence supports _____?
- How might we prove/confirm _____?
- How might this be viewed from the perspective of _____?
- What alternatives should be considered _____?
- What approach/strategy could you use to _____?

7. **Follow-Up Probes**
   - Why?
   - How do you know?
   - Do you agree?
   - Explain.
   - Give your reasons.
   - But what about _____?
   - What do mean by _____?
   - Could you give an example?
   - Tell me more.
   - Can you find that in the text?
   - What data support your position?

8. **Misconception Check**
   Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and explain why. The misconception check can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.