Check for Understanding (CFU)

In one sentence:

CFU allows teachers to move from "I taught it" to "students learned it" by gathering and acting on data before the lesson has concluded.

What the research says:

Research has shown that CFU is critical to effective instruction because it ensures that teachers ask questions and check responses of all students. This helps students practice new information and connect new material to their prior knowledge. (Rosenshine 2012)

What's the point?

- CFU consists of 3 core actions
  - Cultivating a classroom culture that celebrates learning from errors (Culture of Error)
  - Gathering evidence of student learning through questioning and/or observation
  - Acting on the data to address misconceptions or gaps before the lesson is over

How does CFU benefit teachers?

- CFU enables the teacher to maximize instructional time by drilling into current student understanding.
- If students have misunderstandings or gaps, these issues can be addressed before students independently practice using these errors. Catching student misunderstanding early makes it easier to correct
- Teachers can quickly assess students to make lesson adjustments in the moment.
- Instructional time is focused in the areas students are struggling.

How does CFU benefit students?

- Receive reinforcements where they need them, not on skills they've mastered
- Build reflective skills to assess own learning

Checklist: Gathering Data via Questions

- ❑ Grouping answers: Group the responses together to analyze data. What learning or confusion is widespread? What is isolated to a few students?
- ❑ Sampling: Asking students across the spectrum of likely skill to yield better information about who has mastered what. Utilize Cold Call to assess reluctant sharers.
- ❑ Reliability: Ask follow-up questions and require justification of answers to dig into student understanding.
- ❑ Validity: Align questions to the rigor and style of what students will be accountable for. Aim for higher rigor when in doubt.

Checklist: Gathering Data via Observations

- ❑ Looking for What?: Look for number and type of errors, tracking them so you can organize and refer back to the data. A clipboard and student roster makes tracking errors during instruction easier.
- ❑ Affirmative Checking: Establish checkpoints where mastery needs to be achieved before moving on. Checking can be teacher or student facilitated.
- ❑ Standardize the Format: Engineer the place on each student's paper where answers are to be written. Knowing exactly where to find student responses speeds up the process.
- ❑ "Slates": Give your students a place to write down their answers and show the teacher. This allows all students to silently answer a question in unison. Dry-erase boards are ideal for this.

In **Affirmative Checking**, students take an active role in checking for understanding, confirming that their work is correct, productive, or sufficiently rigorous at key points before they move on to the next stage of a task.

Checklist: Affirmative Checking

- ❑ When will the checkpoint happen? Plan for a quick checkpoint prior to independent practice.
- ❑ What's in the checkpoint? It should be short enough to maximize instructional and practice time and aligned to mastery.
- ❑ Who is checking?
    - ❑ Teacher - Set-up the checkpoint to Standardize the Format so you can scan for the answer quickly. Make plans to ensure no student is sitting idle waiting on you.
    - ❑ Student - How will students verify their responses for accuracy? (Answers are posted or a rubric is utilized) How will the teacher receive this data? (Students mark incorrect on paper and teacher circulates)
    - ❑ Peer - Will peer notate feedback on checkpoint? (Mark incorrect on paper, record feedback on the rubric) How will the teacher receive this data? (Students mark incorrect on paper and teacher circulates)
- ❑ What happens after the checkpoint?
    - ❑ The student demonstrates understanding - They start on independent practice.
    - ❑ There are many students with similar errors - Stop and identify the root of the misunderstanding. Correct area of concern before proceeding.
    - ❑ There are a few students with similar errors - Work with them in a small group to identify and correct areas of concern.

Tracking, Not Watching is the practice of identifying specific errors and success points you will be looking for during instruction and tracking them mentally or physically.

Checklist: Tracking, Not Watching

- ❑ Identify what the following indicator looks like in your context
    - ❑ Specific Errors - What aren't students getting and who isn't getting it?
    - ❑ Success Points - What does excellence look like in this contest? How does it differ from completion?
- ❑ How will you track the specific errors and success points as they occur? A clipboard and student roster makes tracking errors and successes during instruction easier.
- ❑ How will you use the gathered information?
    - ❑ Specific Errors - Review with the whole group or small group for clarification. Pose error and ask students to identify and correct.
    - ❑ Success Points - Present to the class as an exemplar.