

TEACH 5: CHECK FOR STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

	Highly Effective	Effective	Minimally Effective	Ineffective
	<i>The following best describes what is observed:</i>	<i>The following best describes what is observed:</i>	<i>The following best describes what is observed:</i>	<i>The following best describes what is observed:</i>
Key Moments	The teacher checks for understanding of content at all key moments.	The teacher checks for understanding of content at almost all key moments (e.g., when checking is necessary to inform instruction going forward, such as after each key point, before transitions between lesson activities, or partway through the independent practice).	The teacher checks for understanding of content at some key moments.	The teacher checks for understanding of content at few or no key moments.
Accurate Pulse	The teacher always gets an accurate “pulse” at key moments by using one or more checks that gather information about the depth of understanding for a range of students, when appropriate.*	The teacher almost always gets an accurate “pulse” at key moments by using one or more checks that gather information about the depth of understanding for a range of students, when appropriate.* For example, the teacher calls on both volunteers and non-volunteers, strategically checks with students at various levels of proficiency after a whole class check, or uses methods such as exit slips or whiteboards to provide information about a range of students.	The teacher sometimes gets an accurate “pulse” at key moments by using one or more checks that gather information about the depth of understanding for a range of students, when appropriate.*	The teacher rarely or never gets an accurate “pulse” at key moments because checks do not gather information about the depth of understanding for a range of students, when appropriate.*

* For some lessons, checking the “pulse” of the class may not be appropriate. For example, if students spend the majority of the observation working on individual essays while the teacher conferences with a few students, it may not be necessary for the teacher to check the understanding of the entire class. In these cases, observers should assess how deeply and effectively the teacher checks for the understanding of the students with whom s/he is working.

1. Because the second row assesses the effectiveness of the checks for understanding, which is the most important aspect of this standard, the second row should receive the majority of the weight when determining an overall score for Teach 5.
2. The teacher does not necessarily have to check with every student in order to gauge the understanding of the class (get the “pulse”). For example, as long as the teacher calls both on students who raise their hands and on those who do not, a series of questions posed to the entire class can enable the teacher to get the “pulse” of the class. Or, if the teacher checks the understanding of a number of students, finds that most of them did not understand some part of the lesson, and immediately re-teaches that part to the entire class, this should count as effectively getting the “pulse” of the class because the teacher gained enough information to be able to adjust subsequent instruction.
3. In some lessons, it can be appropriate to give the teacher credit for checking for understanding of directions, in addition to checking for understanding of content. However, if the teacher only checks for understanding of directions and rarely or never checks for understanding of content, s/he should not receive a Level 3 or Level 4 score for this standard.
4. All of the techniques below can be effective checks for understanding if they are well-executed and appropriate to the lesson. However, each of these techniques can also be used ineffectively. The teacher should not receive credit simply for using a technique on the list. In order to be credited as an effective check for understanding, the technique must yield information that contributes to an accurate “pulse” of the class’s understanding at a key moment.
 - Asking questions; asking students to rephrase material; using turn-and-talks, think-pair-shares, or other verbal checks
 - Asking students to respond on white boards; using exit slips, constructed responses, stop ‘n’ jots, or other written checks
 - Circulating and observing individual students’ or small groups’ work
 - Conferencing with individual students or small groups
 - Using role-playing, four corners, or other tactile/kinesthetic checks