**Checking For Understanding**

Checks for understanding should **occur at each point in the lesso**n. This supports learning content and skills with fewer errors. The most effective teachers:

* Check to see if all students are learning new material or developing misconceptions
* Use formative assessment that makes learning visible

**How do teachers recognize student understanding?**

**Individual students may create products to demonstrate their understanding:**
Ideas for products or performance assessments include: Journals, portfolios, exhibitions, demonstrations, oral presentations, video tapes, songs, slides, rubrics, essays, stories, arguments, costumes, visual works of art, charts, graphic organizers, graphs, tests, labs, Web sites, poems, maps, games.

**Individual students show understanding when they:**

* Take active roles in evaluating their own progress toward goals
* Apply knowledge to real world situations
* Make connections across disciplines, from one reading/ lecture/ video to another, and from something learned in the classroom to their own experience
* Independently solve problems
* Transfer knowledge, or use it in a new situation

**Groups of students show understanding when they:**

* Talk to each other meaningfully about the topic, even when the teacher is with another group
* Rely on each other for knowledge
* Trust student research
* Provide thoughtful, relevant feedback
* Ask for and provide clarification to each other, respect the ideas of each member of the group

**When the Lesson Plan has focused on deepening understanding and building knowledge and skills, classrooms often have these characteristics:**

* Desks and classroom arrangement are flexible and may change to suite the needs of a lesson
* There is more student and teacher made materials on the walls than commercial
* Essential questions, key vocabulary and important goals are visible, either posted directly or evident from student work

**Teachers facilitate the deepening understanding when they:**

* Align assessments with goals/objectives and with learning activities
* Provide activities which engage critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities while responding to an investigative question related to an understanding goal
* Assess often and adjust instruction
* Offer assignment choice based on student needs
* Plan lessons so that there is time to confer and offer feedback with individuals and/or groups of students.
* Plan lessons so that students receive feedback on their work from a variety of sources (peers, self, expert guests, and teachers)

<http://www.tpsnva.org/teach/best_practices/recognize_student_understanding.php>