



Assessing understanding is an essential part of teaching as it gives you an insight about the level of knowledge pupils have. It should be used throughout explanations to check whether you need to re-teach the step you have just introduced or move onto the next.

Assessing understanding can be challenging to get right. In order to appreciate how to check for understanding effectively, it is helpful to consider what constitutes poor practice to highlight strategies to avoid. Rosenshine (1982, cited Sherrington, 2019, p. 31) highlights that the wrong way to check for understanding is:

*“...to ask only a few questions, call on volunteers to hear their (usually correct) answers, and then assume that all of the class either understands or has now learned from hearing the volunteers’ responses. Another error is to ask, ‘Are there any questions?’ and, if there aren’t any, assume that everybody understands. Another error is to assume that it is not necessary to check for understanding, and simply repeating the points will be sufficient.”*

Sherrington, 2019

Checking for and building understanding through questioning is a vital process that should occur continuously throughout the lesson. Below are some key features of checking for understanding that should be incorporated into your questioning, which will be explored in this session:

- Avoid self-report questions - ask questions that directly assess pupils' understanding of the material being taught.
- Check whole class understanding.
- Provide appropriate wait time after asking a question to allow pupils to generate a response.