

# CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT RIGHT AWAY!)

from Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov

**WHEN TEACHERS EFFECTIVELY CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING,  
THEY GATHER DATA CONSTANTLY AND THEN ACT ON THE DATA IMMEDIATELY.**

*The second part (acting on the data quickly) is both harder to do and at least as important.*

## MAKING QUESTIONING DATA DRIVEN

1. *Sampling* – When a teacher samples a class, s(he) asks iterations of a single question or a set of questions to a smaller group of students and uses the answers as a representation of a larger group's answers.
2. *Data Sets* – We tend to think of a single answer as reflective of where the class is at any given time. But a single answer can come from anywhere on a curve of student mastery. Instead, you should reflect on your questions in groups and think of them as data sets. By thinking of your questions as data sets, you come to realize that wrong, wrong, wrong, right is a bad sequence, not a good one. It also tells you that wrong, right is not enough data.
3. *Statistical Sampling* – As you ask questions in sets, think about taking a statistical sample of the room. Ask a sample of students from across the spectrum of likely skill: two typically low-performing students, two middle students, and one high performer.
4. *Reliability* – Any right answer always poses the risk of its being a false positive – a lucky correct guess. Therefore, stop teaching when your students get it right several times in a row, not just once.
5. *Validity* – Make sure that the question you get a positive result to is an effective measure of what students have to master to be successful. You should carefully align the questions you ask to check for understanding on the rigor and style of questions your students will ultimately be accountable for.

## RESPONDING TO DATA

There are several actions to take in response to data telling you that student mastery is incomplete:

- Reteach using a different approach.
- Reteach by identifying and reteaching the problem step.
- Reteach by identifying and explaining difficult terms.
- Reteach at a slower pace.
- Reteach using a different order.
- Reteacher identifying students of concern.
- Reteach using more repetitions.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING TECHNIQUE IN ACTION...

See how teachers use this technique in their classroom, by watching these short videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txdxPJcMzKE>