Techniques to Check for Understanding

1. **Index Card Summaries and Questions**
   Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions:

   (Side 1)
   Based on our study of *(unit topic)*, list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement.

   (Side 2)
   Identify something about *(unit topic)* that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.

2. **Hand Signals**
   Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process:

   - I understand ____________ and can explain it *(e.g., thumbs up)*.
   - I do not yet understand ____________ *(e.g., thumbs down)*.
   - I’m not completely sure about ____________ *(e.g., wave hand)*.

3. **Question Box or Board**
   Establish a location *(e.g., question box, bulletin board, or e-mail address)* where students may leave or post questions about concepts, principals, or processes that they do not understand. This technique may benefit students who are uncomfortable saying aloud that they do not understand.

4. **Analogy Prompt**
   Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt:
   *(A designated concept, principle, or process)* is like ____________ because ____________.

5. **Visual Representation (Web or Concept Map)**
   Ask students to create a visual representation *(e.g., web, concept map, flow chart, or time line)* to show the elements or components of a topic or process. This technique effectively reveals whether students understand the relationships among the elements.
6. **Oral Questioning**

Use the following questions and follow-up probes regularly to check for understanding:

- How is __________ similar to/different from ____________________________?
- What are the characteristics/parts of ____________________________________?
- In what other ways might we show show/illustrate ________________________?
- What is the big idea, key concept, moral in ______________________________?
- How does _______________ relate to _________________________________?
- What ideas/details can you add to _____________________________________?
- Give an example of _________________________________________________?
- What is wrong with _________________________________________________?
- What might you infer from ___________________________________________?
- What conclusions might be drawn from __________________________________?
- What question are we trying to answer? What problem are we trying to solve?
- What are you assuming about _________________________________________?
- What might happen if ________________________________?
- What criteria would you use to judge/evaluate ____________________________?
- What might this be viewed from the perspective of _______________________?
- What alternatives should be considered ________________________________?
- What approach/strategy could you use to _______________________________

7. **Follow-Up Probes**

- Why?
- How do you know?
- Do you agree?
- Explain.
- Give your reasons.
- But what about __________________?
- What do mean by __________?  
- Could you give an example?
- Tell me more.  
- Can you find that in the text?  
- What data support your position?  

8. **Misconception Check**

Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and explain why. The misconception check can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.