

Check-in Questions on the Go: Expand and Clarify Students' Understanding

Checking in with students as you walk around the classroom serves to both 1) encourage students to ask questions or get real-time feedback, and 2) provide the instructional team with more nuanced insights about what students are understanding or struggling with.

Asking questions as you walk around the room:

- Can you tell me what you are working on? What has been challenging so far?
- In looking at this problem, which part do you think will be most important to focus on?
- How did you or would you start with this problem?
- What is most unclear so far? What is a big takeaway that you have so far?
- Does this remind you of anything else from this class/ in other classes?

Follow up: Once they have shared their insights with you, you might follow up with questions or statements that allow you to expand and clarify their understanding, such as:

- **Clarify their answers:** Tell me more about that.
- **Support their answers:** What about the material made you think that ___?
- **Argue:** Convince us that __.
- **Examine their responses more fully:** In what other context does that idea play out?
- **Consider different perspectives:** What would you say to someone who thought __?
- **Predict:** What do you think that we will discover next?
- **Hypothesize:** How would you handle a situation like ___?
- **Decide:** So, this leads you to what conclusions?
- **Compare:** How is your answer different or the same from others?
- **Generalize:** What did you discover?

Suggestions to encourage student responses:

- In addition to walking along aisles, look for empty rows to walk through to be closer to students in the middle of the rows. Students will be more likely to engage with you when you are in closer proximity to them.
- Keep it simple– don't ask too many questions at once.
- Avoid asking a question and answering it yourself. Allow students enough time to think and respond; this may mean waiting 3–30 seconds depending on the question.
- Correct wrong answers, but do so kindly so as not to discourage future participation. If part of the answer was correct, be sure to acknowledge this part. If time, ask them to explain how they arrived at their answer, so they can identify potential misconceptions, or missteps.
- Depending on the situation, if students are truly stuck on a practice problem, you might help them solve the problem while explaining your thinking and having them help guide, and then provide them with a new practice problem to solve on their own.
- If possible, try to kneel or sit when engaging with students. You might opt to listen in for a short time to better know how to support them – explain that you're just eavesdropping and that they can continue working.
- Observe group dynamics and interact accordingly; for example, if you see one student dominating the group conversation, try directing questions to the other group members to involve everyone. You might encourage students to engage with each other: "Does anyone else have ideas about how to approach this problem?"