Fröjd's Toolbox - Roundtable on Checking for Understanding (CfU) (27 Aug 2026) with *Kate Jones, Dylan Wiliam, Nidhi Sachdeva, Tom Sherrington* **hosted by** ***Kennet Fröjd***

Planning Summary by Helen Reynolds @itsalearningcurve.education

Content	Do This
Getting evidence KJ: Had a flawed habit of 'hands-up' →felt comfortable but ineffective, developed better methods DW: Most important assessment NOT at the end, formative assessment (FA) NOT any assessment before the 'big one', means better evidence →better decisions NS: CfU diagnose misconceptions, what to re-teach, CfU lives **inside** teaching, can be error prevention, well-practiced CfU = feedback for students (Ss), Rosenshine = ask lots of questions= effective TS:, T grateful for anyone to answer, just moves on without checking everyone = grazing surface. 'Has everyone understood?' = useless, need to flex, see Inside the Black Box (Black and Wiliam).	• Don't rely on evidence from a few Ss • Get data from wide range ideally all • More reliable evidence = use mini-whiteboards (MWB)/ cold-calling / circling room while working • Use elaboration as well to CfU • Develop & use a range of strategies: all student response AND sampling so you can flix • CfU throughout instruction
Barriers DW: Too much content → after CfU Ts make uncomfortable choices/ recalibrate KJ: … + if you'll just carry on, why bother with CfU?! Except it delays issues till later.	• Prepare to be uncomfortable when you find out they didn't get it & you have to re-teach – be flexible
Student, agency, and CfU TS: Lack of time →train Ss to assess themselves. Mistrust of Ss doing CfU in T training, loss of control, BUT Ss are meaning making for themselves, which Ts can't see DW: Ts can make Ss agents of their own learning, should be ultimate goal for how they leave us. (John Flavell) Definition of metacognition can be e.g.: learning A is harder than B & I need to check C, hard to define 'learning to learn' but explaining to S how their brains work helps KJ: (Semester): common attributes highly successful Ss – 97% asked for help as needed, less successful Ss need it/don't ask, need to dispel myth that easy = smart DW: Level of q generated by AI may be shallow/unhelpful, like taking robot to gym TS: Peer assessment: ok for right/wrong, harder for quality type answers, without 'culture of error' →masking, can't CfU if worried about being wrong, unhelpful. Ss spotting errors →more likely to learn from them. DW: "Mistakes are evidence that the work I gave you was tough enough to make you smarter." DW has changed mind – used to be getting higher grades, now important they leave school at 18 with curiosity/metacognition/wanting to learn TS: Need tools that do NOT involve T (impossible for T to check all individually),	• Metacognition empowers Ss • Learn to trust Ss to be their own checkers/CfU by teaching them how • Willingham's Outsmart Your Brain = user manual for S agency • Teach them what works/what doesn't • Teach that AI qs can be misleading – illusion of knowing/understanding • Make it normal to not know/make a mistake = culture of error • Try out AI to inform quality of peer assessment • All about 'keeping learning on track' • Comparative judgement (ranking own work in relation to other work) useful for S
Using evidence: DW: Waste of time collecting evidence without using it → 'decision driven data collection' via hinge point qs, teaching is contingent NOT linear, Ausubel → start from where Ss are NOT where we wish they would be from our teaching TS: Evidence may →can go faster, teaching is contingent AND seeking errors KJ: Beware poor proxies for learning (Rob Coe) e.g. engagement/a correct answer can be right for a wrong reason/superficial DW: T response to S can be statement (James Dillon) →Ss give longer/more thoughtful answers, not sure why? Maybe because you can't be wrong responding to statement, shift to having conversation vs. question/answer NS: CfU implies qs, like retrieval vs testing, eliciting evidence is gentle not interrogative TS: Oracy/learning via talking/having to explain it →forces thinking/show to yourself DW: (Brent Davis): how Ts listen: evaluatively (e.g. 'nearly!')/interpretively (what's in their head), qs can limit info you get to find out, make sure qs are strong NS: Need qs in advance to elicit misconceptions (especially novice Ts) till routine DW: (Linda Allal) proactive/interactive/retroactive 'regulation of learning processes': planning = pro, in lesson = inter, retro = what can I do differently.	• Have to be able to pivot/change as a result of evidence • Plan hinge point qs – if you're a novice then script this out • Need to have material to use based on where they are e.g what's next • A correct answer needs follow up e.g. elaboration after MWB • Responding with statement e.g. 'Huh, that's interesting'= GOOD, gentler than Q&A • Talk is powerful/build routines • Shift from evaluative →interpretive • Check qs can't be answered by S with partial understanding/ misconception • Avoid unhelpful rabbit holes – choose whether to respond

Vocab KJ: CfU should include vocab via oracy, TS: "Ibble is worth 2 obbles" → some qs Ss don't need to know meaning of word to be correct, strong qs →they HAVE to understand what the word means.	• Use choral response = confident with pronunciation • Explaining in pairs, one explains, other verifies
Multiple-choice qs DW: Misconception →can only use for low-order knowledge (K), using wrong answers → discussion, works because Ss own answers.	• Use exit ticket wrong responses to make MCQs for next lesson
Thinking time NS: need to give enough time → part of good CfU, can be uncomfortable, practice DW: If dominated by fast Ss, can't see how 'smart' rest are, more inclusive	• Check your 'wait time' – it's longer than you think • Plan it/ask it/be quiet (it's hard)
Exit tickets/learning vs. performance KJ: Criticisms: too late (not if you've done lots of CfU before), only shows performance DW: (Shana Carpenter) end of lesson RP can be detected 6 months later. Can't observe learning, takes a long time (weeks), whether it sticks depends on instruction, distinguish learning intention (useful for T), success criteria (useful for T and S) TS: (Mark McCourt) Cues: are you telling them what the q is about? Recency: can be fooled because they remember more recently, FA can be formative action (what you will do based on evidence), must verify later after reteach, needs checking DW: CfU goes 2 ways = Cf performance + Cf learning, 'new theory of disuse', retrieving from memory → strengthens memories. Harder to retrieve (via interleaving etc.) makes for 'desirable difficulties' (≠ productive struggle) in retrieval/encoding/transfer	• Can recycle exit tickets →entrance • May not be CfU but still useful consolidation of content • Removing cues (e.g. this is Pythagoras q) →q more demanding • Continue to verify again and again, after re-teach, over time • Mixing questions up better as S have to choose technique • Make it hard to retrieve – leads to better storage strength
Final thoughts: KJ: Move away from 'vibes' to 'credible evidence' NS: Correct answers can be illusory – check for thinking and respond TS: CfU = get data on ALL students to ACT on and tool them up to act on it DW: CfU is about inclusion/equity/fairness – everyone matters, everyone belongs.	

Podcast here:

https://frojdstoolbox.podbean.com/e/avsnitt-75-roundtable-on-checking-for-understanding-kate-jones-dylan-wiliam-nidhi-sachdeva-tom-sherrington/